

The Galilean
or
JESUS
The World's Savior

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Yours faithfully
Geo. D. Coomer

THE GALILEAN

OR

JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR

BY

laude
GEORGE C. LORIMER, D.D.

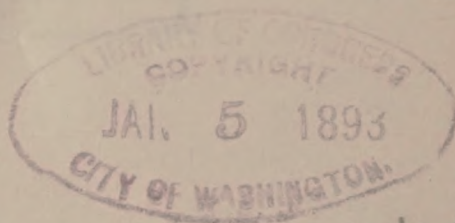
"
MINISTER AT THE TEMPLE

"This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee"

MATTHEW

"The world's ransom, blessed Mary's son"

SHAKESPEARE



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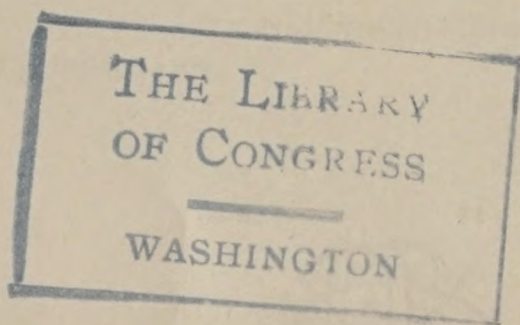
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A Loving Tribute

HUMBLY LAID AT THE FEET OF

HIM

WHOSE NAME IS ABOVE EVERY NAME

NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD

BUT IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME

TO WHOM

BE BLESSING AND HONOR, AND GLORY AND POWER

FOREVER AND EVER

Amen

“To Thee this strain I bring, —
Be propitious, O my King!
Take the music which is mine
Anthemed from the songs Divine.”

SYNESIUS

INTRODUCTION.

THIS volume was originally published several years ago. Of late it has been out of print, and as demands for it have increased, it is once more given to the public. In reparing and rearranging the work for the press, the author by revisions and additions has aimed to enlarge its scope, and to render it a more complete exposition of the great Galilean's life. The sermon-chapters on the "Religion of Jesus," on His "Philanthropy," on His "Truth-Spirit," and on His "Anguish" and "Ascension," are entirely new, and the one on the "Future of Jesus," has been re-written. By these changes, the book has been brought into touch with the spirit of the times, and with some of the larger questions now agitating them; and they have likewise gone far toward making it a sufficient guide to the broader and more generous orthodoxy of our evangelical churches—an orthodoxy that seeks to avoid the narrow literalism of the old theology and the diffusive idealism of the new. The writer has not attempted to discuss the views of Strauss and Renan on the great theme he has here treated, neither has he essayed a formal biography of our Savior after the manner of Neander, Geike, or Farrar. His humbler aim has been, while seeking to preserve the unity of history, to present a series of pictures of the Galilean, and to unfold such distinct aspects of His earthly ministry as best may meet the religious needs of this generation.

It has appeared to him that our Lord's life has usually been drawn without much regard to its real bearing on the life of the world; that it has rarely, if ever, been studied with a view to the lessons it conveys for the guidance of the perplexed, and the example it sets for the imitation of all classes and conditions of mankind. To confute the infidel, to silence the skeptic, or to satisfy the curious, has, with hardly an exception, been the object proposed by those who have undertaken

to declare "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." Such being the case, "it seemed good" to the author of this volume, "having had *some* understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus" — or, what in this instance is the same, most excellent reader — that the moral and spiritual lessons of Christ's life might be more clearly discerned, and be more highly appreciated.

The importance of this endeavor will be recognized by all who perceive the personal grandeur of Jesus, and the relation He sustains to the highest interests of the race. He is the source, the supreme and ultimate source, of its most sacred hopes, and the only perfect model of everything that beautifies it in character and dignifies it in conduct. In the sphere wherein He moves He is absolute, the sole and exclusive teacher, and the unparalleled and unmatched exemplar. In comparison with Him and with His influence, all other careers, even the most saintly, are as trivial and as unavailing as the shadow of a cloud falling on sea or mountain. From the window of the room where these words are penned the Lake of Lucerne, in all of its transparent and placid loveliness, is visible, and recalls the part it plays, in common with other inland waters, in the physical economy of Europe. Michelet states that the glacier floods flow into the lakes of Switzerland, where they are sunned and purified, that they may thus be rendered wholesome before they stream forth as rivers on their fertilizing mission. And thus the blessed Christ receives humanity, sin-soiled and surcharged with the elements of moral death, and does what no other being, even the best, can do, transforms it by contact with Himself into His own image, and sends it forth in sacred ministries of grace and healing. Anything, therefore, that can be done, though it may be crude in conception and rude in execution, to bring society into close personal relations with the Savior, and to enable it to realize more deeply its dependence on Him, not only for redemption and sanctification, but for wisdom as well, must prove advantageous, and may fairly claim the kindest and most lenient judgment of the critic.

In giving this modest volume to the press, the writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the various authorities he has quoted, and likewise to pray that his readers may be led, by its perusal, to take for their motto what he himself has adopted for many years, *Aut Christus, aut nullus*, "either Christ or nobody."

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JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR.

I.

PORTRAITS OF JESUS.

To us * * * there is but one Lord Jesus Christ. *I Cor. viii, 6.*

FROUDE'S portrait of Henry VIII differs notably from those which have been drawn by other English historians. There is more of the hero about his king, and more that is generally praiseworthy than such writers as Hume and Green will allow. Nevertheless, though these variations must be apparent to every student, it is impossible not to recognize in these several descriptions certain identical features which indicate clearly that they are designed to be counterparts of the same original. This is likewise true of the pictures which have been painted of the great Napoleon. That of Scott does not correspond exactly with that of Abbott, and that of Abbott does not fully agree with that of Mme. de Rémusat. The first sees him as an unscrupulous despot; the second, as a generous, victorious soldier; and the third, as a petulant and arrogant husband. Scott looks at him mainly in the cabinet, Abbott views him almost entirely in the field, and De Rémusat in the home. Yet, notwithstanding the evident onesidedness of their respective conceptions, there are still such resemblances preserved that we cannot fail to see in them the same historic personage, and, perhaps, cannot fail to feel that their exaggerations of particular characteristics aid us to a complete comprehension of the man

as he was. The painting that portrays Napoleon's coronation is very unlike that which exhibits him at Waterloo, and the representation of the ruined general on that decisive battle-ground is different from that which reveals him dying in exile; but in all we trace the same countenance, whether lit and radiant with the consciousness of power, or shaded and darkened with the sense of defeat, or elevated and beautified by the approach of death.

Speaking of paintings, I am reminded that Schlegel, in his *Esthetics*, with nice discrimination points out how variously the art-masters have treated the form and face of Jesus. He shows that the Christ of Bellini, at Berlin, is more severe, more sublime and Godlike, than that of Fra Bartolomeo at Paris; and that of Titian is more symbolic and suggestive of deeper mysteries, such as the Trinity, than either of the others; while that of Correggio surpasses them all in spiritual depth and beauty. But, though the "Christ Teaching" of Bellini, and the "Christ Blessing" of Titian, and the "Christ Taken from the Cross" of Correggio, are easily distinguishable from each other, they are united by common endeavors to bring out the moral grandeur, the suffering greatness, the infinite tenderness of the original. The artists carry into their work their own impressions of His wonderful nature; they color it with their own peculiar sentiments, and mark it with the imprint of their own genius; and yet, though their pictures betray their individuality, we discover in them all such evidences of fidelity to what is known of Christ that they alike reveal Him to our reverent faith and adoring love.

Each of the four Gospels contains a portrait of Jesus. On this account Goethe regarded them as thoroughly genuine and divine; and on this account Rousseau exclaimed: "How petty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels!" They

thus felt, because these writings reflect "the splendor of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Him," who, as Jean Paul Richter expresses it, "Being the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." Unfortunately, all men have not sympathized with these views, and pronounced unbelievers have done all in their power to throw discredit on the descriptions given of Jesus in the Gospels. Some among them have tried to prove that the Jesus of the New Testament is a fiction—an attempt to combine in one ideal the characteristics of two different personages who bore the same name, but who moved in widely opposite spheres, and who are alluded to as separate individuals by Josephus. (See *The Jesus of History* by Solomon.) Others have argued that the books bearing the names of the evangelists give internal evidence—at least three of them, usually called the Triple Tradition—of being copies, more or less exact, of one original document, and hence, partly in support of this theory, but mainly to lessen the force of their evidence, they have claimed, in common with the author of *Supernatural Religion*, that the Gospel according to Luke appeared 170 A.D.; that of Mark, 175 A.D.; that of John, 178 A.D.; and that of Matthew, 180 A.D.; and others have insisted that the likenesses themselves are open to serious criticism, as they lack unity and identity of spiritual physiognomy, and, consequently, suggest that their authors are more indebted to their imagination for the image they embody than to an actual, historical personage. But, though these objections are vehemently urged, and with great parade of scholarship, by infidel writers and lecturers, I do not think them sufficiently weighty, resting, as they do, on the slimmest of foundations, to occasion Christian people anxiety or alarm; nor would I have referred to them in this

connection were it not that their consideration is necessarily involved in any fair discussion of the sources from which we derive reliable information concerning Christ. These sources I desire in this discourse briefly to present, and, in seeking to give an adequate idea of their trustworthiness, I am compelled to notice the charges alleged against them; but, however unpleasant in some respects this task may be, I hope that its performance may help the most skeptical among us to believe that in the Gospels we have authentic pictures of our Lord.

Ernest Renan, whose antagonism to Christianity is undisguised, is far from sympathizing with those who disparage the documents which account for its origin. Though he rejects what he regards as legendary in them, he concedes their historical value, "since they carry us back to the half-century following the death of Jesus, and even, in two cases, to eye-witnesses of His acts." He believes that Luke wrote soon after the destruction of Jerusalem; that Matthew wrote at even an earlier date; and that, in substance, the fourth Gospel was published toward the end of the first century. (*Introduction to Life of Jesus.*) This is important testimony coming from such a witness, and it is fully confirmed by English, German, and American critics, such as Westcott, Sanday, Abbott, Bleek, Keim, and Hilgenfeld, who agree with our own Prof. Ezra Abbott, of Harvard, in the conclusion that the four Gospels were in use during the times of Justin Martyr—that is, not later than 147 A.D., some twenty-three years earlier than the book entitled *Supernatural Religion* assigns to their origin. The evidence on this point is quite decisive; and the inference from it is that the writings must have been comparatively well authenticated for them to have been employed as authorities; and as they were so appealed to in the early portion of the second century, they must certainly have appeared in the

latter part of the first. Personally, I believe with Hitzig, that Mark wrote 55-57 A.D.; with Hertwig, that Matthew wrote before the siege of Jerusalem, about 60 A.D.; with Godet, that Luke wrote not far from the same period — perhaps six or ten years later; and, as it is admitted that John died near the year 100 A.D., I concur with Abbott in ascribing his Gospel to an earlier date. From these figures it will be inferred that I am not in sympathy with the theory that regards the first three books of the canon as transcripts of a yet older document. I certainly am not a convert to this view, though it is advocated by some able men; because the occasional identity of phraseology, upon which it is based, and which cannot be denied, is not sufficiently decisive to prove that the evangelists were merely copyists; neither can it offset the marks of independent authorship which their productions reveal. They seem rather to have studied for themselves one original, and that not a document, but a person, and to have recorded their own impressions and the results of their own observations, and to have done it freely from their peculiar point of view, and in harmony with their personal idiosyncrasies.

This explains why we have four portraits, and why, in some respects, they are dissimilar; why one picture brings out features that seem obscure in the others, and why one brings into the light characteristics which the others leave in the shadow. Freidrich von Schlegel reminds us that artists are distinguished from each other by striking differences of manner. He calls Correggio a musical painter, because of his attention to harmony; he speaks likewise of a sculpturesque style, and of an architectural style; and he says that Holbein is stiff, because he reproduces nature unimaginatively, while Titian, true to details, yet invests his composition with an ideal grace. Leonardo Da Vinci is famous for the correctness of his outlines, and for his

ability to embody the peculiar traits of character which marked the people whom he painted. Raphael delineates with more poetic grandeur than others; Michael Angelo, with greater massiveness; and Albert Dürer with greater mysteriousness. We also have realistic artists, and sensationists, and Whistler has been called, I believe, "an impressionist" — terms which denote some predominant and specific type which gives distinctness to their work. That is, painters paint themselves in their pictures, inject their warm or cold sentiments into their colors, impart their wealth of knowledge to their conceptions, and the glow of their genius to the creations of their hands. While faithful to nature, if they are sincere, they are also faithful to themselves. While they reproduce accurately what they see, it is as they see it, and as they feel it; and while they adhere rigidly to the model they copy, they transfer to the copy the fair ideals which the model itself has awakened in their souls.

These thoughts, without impropriety, if not with absolute exactness, may be applied to the evangelists. We hold, in common with the orthodox Christian world, that they were inspired of God to write the Gospels. What the precise measure of inspiration was which they enjoyed, the Church knows not, and is even in doubt regarding its essential nature; but that they were led and influenced by the Eternal Spirit in their work she is confident, and that they were permitted the free exercise of their faculties, while under this Divine superintendence, is her growing conviction; that is, without rigidly defining it, she holds to an inspiration that leaves unimpaired the individuality of its recipient; and that she is warranted in making this distinction is evinced by the writings of the evangelists themselves. The more we examine them, the more we find them separated by peculiarities of style and by methods of treatment, which indicate that their authors approached

their common theme from a personal standpoint, investigated it independently, and recorded their impressions in their own way. For instance, Mark's Gospel is very different from the others. Its Greek is comparatively rude and at times unmusical; its manner is abrupt and sharp, and its narrative is frequently detached and hurried. It is the production of a mind not given to care for detail or for rhetorical embellishment, and still less for theological speculations. Mark introduces Christ suddenly to his readers, gives no account of His birth, says little if anything of His relation to the Jewish law, pays only slight attention to His discourses, and records none of the longer ones, and does not even dwell on His resurrection at length. His Jesus is a being more of deeds than of words, a being invested with strange and miraculous energy, the nature of which he does not take pains to explain, and a being whose attitude toward the race is that of a servant intent on ministering to its spiritual well-being. (See *Four Gospels* by Jukes.) Mark may be compared to Holbein among painters, on account of his stiffness of style and his unimaginativeness, and to Whistler on account of his reliance on contrasts for designed effects; and he may be set down as the prince of synoptics, and, perhaps, as the only true one among the evangelists; for he, more than the others, merely relates incidents in the life of our Lord, and is not always careful to preserve their true chronological order.

In other terms must we speak of Matthew. He is more somber than Luke, more connected than Mark, and less theological than John. His language is generally excellent, his style approximates to stateliness, and his narrative partakes of the unity which is proper to biography. He records the genealogy of Jesus, details the circumstances of His birth, reports very fully His discourses, and follows Him through all the events of His career until He finally parts with His disciples, after the resurrection. His

Jesus is essentially Jewish and essentially regal. He represents Him as related to the law as its exponent and fulfillment, and as related to the promise given to Abraham, being its heir and its substance. He regards him throughout as a King, invests Him with all authority in heaven and on earth, and describes Him as revealing, as bringing near, or establishing the Kingdom of Heaven, a form of speech occurring some thirty times in his Gospel. If Mark may be likened to Holbein, Matthew may be compared to Leonardo on account of his power to embody personal peculiarities, and to Angelo on account of his grandeur. He is preëminently the biographer of Jesus, and he reproduces the moral magnitudes of his hero with a hand as bold and a manner as massive as ever distinguished the genius of Michael Angelo.

The third evangelist seems to belong to a different school. He is more artistic, poetic, and esthetic than his colleagues. Luke's Gospel gives evidence of having been written by an educated man. As a composition it is chaste and elegant; it is also exceedingly diversified, ranging in style from the simple story of Bethany to the stately measure of the Magnificat; and it is at times highly colored, the scenes it portrays being wrought up vividly and dramatically. Instances of this latter grace we have in the narrative of the nativity, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the pictures of the Prodigal Son and of Dives and Lazarus. The Jesus Luke paints is more a friend than a servant, more a brother to humanity than a ruler, more a man than a Jew. He makes the angels herald the coming of peace to the earth with His advent; he sings of "good will" to man; he reveals his hero as unprejudiced enough to commend an alien's faith, and as disregarding the absurd restraints imposed on women by ignorance and tyranny. His Christ is free from the limitations that appear in Matthew, and His sympathies with the world are more mani-

fest; and there is a refinement and gentleness in His bearing which the preceding writers fail to produce as perfectly. Luke is essentially an artist, and may be classed with Raphael and Correggio among painters on account of his poetic temperament and the harmonious grandeur of his delineations. But John is of another spirit. He is more like Albert Dürer than Correggio. He is mystical, transcendental, theological. His Christ is from the first a Divine incarnation, concerning whom it is more important to know that He is the Son of God than that He is the Son of Mary. He is a Being on the earth, but not of the earth, moving about in heavenly fellowships, angels descending and ascending on Him, and voices of the Eternal guiding and comforting Him. The servant of Mark's Gospel that rises to kingship in Matthew's, and the king of Matthew's Gospel that attains to the higher rank of brother in Luke's, here transcends all human limitations, and appears in alliance with God. If Mark paints in outline, and if Matthew boldly defines the foreground, and if Luke touches all with light and beauty, verily John works up the background, which, like the sea and horizon in the pictures of Leonardo, stretches toward the limitless, and is lost in the infinite.

It is the theory of Ewald and of other learned men that John's Gospel was designed to supplement and complete the other three, and that it was written to expose the errors of those Jews who looked upon Jesus merely as the greatest of the prophets, and denied the superhuman in his character, and to counteract the errors of those among the Gentiles who viewed Him as in some sense divine, while they resolved His humanity into a mere appearance and illusion. Whether the theory is worthy of confidence I shall not undertake to determine, but that John's Gospel is really fitted to serve these ends every person familiar with its contents will admit. At the very outset its author insists on the real humanity and the real divinity of the Savior.

Not only does he declare that the Word was God, but that the Word was made flesh and dwelt with man. He passes as comparatively unimportant the account of His nativity; he rises above the stable and the manger to the throne, and startles his readers with the announcement which, for sublimity, is only equalled by that which introduces the history of creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Never, throughout the whole of his testimony, does he deviate from this primary assumption. He reveals Him as sustaining an altogether singular and exceptional relation to the Infinite Father, and represents Him as laying stress upon it in His teachings. He reports that Jesus horrified the Jews by claiming to be one with the Father, so that the Father is in Him and He in the Father; and he gives an account of His prayer in which He sought a return to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Mingling with this supreme conception are the most beautiful allusions to His humanity. His kindness to Nathaniel, His genial approval of the marriage festivities at Cana, His brotherly sympathy with Mary and Martha, His interview with Nicodemus, and His compassion toward the woman of Samaria, display fine touches of a nature identical with our own. He is thus seen to be one with us, as He is one with the Father. The human and the divine, like two planets, are in conjunction in Him, and shed upon the world a blended light.

In setting forth what this mysterious Being is in Himself, John does not fail to magnify what He is to the race. According to his representations, He is something more than a rabbi, though He was the wisest that ever taught; more than a prophet, though eminently gifted with the vision of the seer; more than a law-giver, and more by far than a reformer. Nothing less is He than the very "bread of life;" "the living water," which prevents all

future soul-thirst; "the true vine," from whose root and stem His disciples draw their spiritual vitality; "the good Shepherd," and the very "door" itself, by which the wandering sheep enter into the fold of eternal rest; "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," "the Light of life," and the "Resurrection and the Life," through whom and by whom the ignorant and the guilty may attain to knowledge, purity and everlasting felicity. All this is He, according to John, and, in addition, He is "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." In these words His relation to the world's guilt and misery is disclosed. They carry us back to the history of sacrifices, to the place they have occupied in all the religions of the past, and to their singular influence upon the nations. They impart meaning to the ritual of ancient Israel, and explain the mystery of its termination. As we read them we begin to apprehend the truth that the bloody offerings and priestly intercessions of other and more venerable systems pointed to an atonement for sin, demanded by the moral exigencies of mankind, which should underlie Christianity, and which would render the continuance of an elaborate ritual superfluous. As all other lights are dimmed and are rendered unnecessary by the superior luster of the sun, so ceremonial intimations and scenic representations of expiation become colorless and useless in presence of the great reality which they herald. Our Lord, therefore, is the substance and completion of ancient sacrifices. They are alike fulfilled and abrogated in Him, and, in consequence, He is more than teacher or prophet; He is supremely the world's Savior.

This is John's ideal, an ideal in which the other evangelists share, though it must be admitted that it is not as clear in their writings as in his. At times they approach it, grope toward it, seem indeed to grasp it, and give expression to thoughts that are inexplicable apart from it,

and yet they fail to present it as completely and as consistently as John. It is the distinction of the fourth evangelist that he carries the intimations of the others to their legitimate results, perfects their conceptions, develops their ideas and combines them, blending them with what he himself knows of Jesus, into an all-inclusive, harmonious, and more finished picture of His character and work.

And as he seems to comprehend Him more fully than his brother evangelists, so does he seem to penetrate more deeply than they into the animating spirit of our Savior's mission. He lifts up his eyes and reads on all things above him "love," he looks on everything around him and echoes "love;" and meditates on Him from whose wisdom and power all things sprang, and devoutly answers "love." To him love is the key that unlocks the riddle of the universe, the clue that unravels the mystery of life, the explanation that glorifies the Gospel and that imparts to it its power. This term exhausts the whole of his theology, for "God is love;" it sums up his views of human duty, for we should "love one another;" and it expresses the entirety of his knowledge regarding Christ, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Not only his theology, but his sociology and soteriology are comprehended in love. To think of God aright we must think of love; to discharge the obligations of life aright we must embody love; to govern society aright we must organize love, and to understand Jesus aright we must fathom love. God is love in its essence, reigning absolute; Christ is love incarnate, obeying, suffering; and His disciples are love in its efflorescence and beauty. To this spirit, not to justice, wrath or vengeance, does he ascribe the advent of our Lord. He came because He loved, He was given because God loved, and he came and was given that men

might love Him and the Father and each other. And if there is anything in the universe capable of quickening the better and higher qualities of humanity, of transforming its sin-cursed nature and of awakening its purest and loftiest ambition, it must be a love that bears with its infirmities, atones for its guilt, and sympathizes with its sorrow. Such is the love of Jesus, and whenever it is apprehended in its length and its breadth, and in its height and its depth, it must renew our fallen race in its own image, and crown it with its own glory.

But is it true that we have in these portraits four representations of the same character? This, at least, is their claim—a claim that is established by the resemblance which their apparent differences cannot hide. They alike reveal an innocent, blameless, sympathetic Being, of supernatural powers and of benevolent purpose, who asserts His right to forgive sins, who seeks the salvation of the world through His own self-abnegation and sufferings, and who, at last, rises triumphant over death and the grave. They all agree in these particulars. One writer may express these things abstractly, may anatomize the essential nature of the Being he describes, and formulate for us the impressions we should receive of His gracious offices; while another may do the same concretely, may place this hero in action, and leave the deeds He performs, and the influence He exerts to tell their own story. According to Lessing, this latter was the method of Homer. This old poet gives us no elaborate analysis of Helen's beauty, no fulsome exposition of her charms, but leaves his readers to form an idea of what she was by what she caused; and, when they see the gray-haired warriors overwhelmed by her presence, and trace the Trojan war to its origin in her abduction by Paris, they can infer for themselves her personal loveliness. And this method more or less distinguished the evangelists—with the exception of John.

Three of them at least present Jesus, living, speaking, acting, and we hardly need the doctrinal statements of the fourth to convince us of His superhuman nature and origin; for these are manifest in what He does, and in the moral convulsions which He occasions, and are made even more manifest by the course of the world's history since His ascension, which at every stage has felt His molding influence. But whether in this way or some other, the portraits drawn by the evangelists are likenesses of the one Christ. The marks of identity are too manifold for any reasonable uncertainty to be entertained; and, as Neander has shown in answer to Strauss, the perfection they delineate is so different from what passed as perfection in their day, and is so contrary to their own characters, that it must have been embodied before their eyes for them to have painted it at all. The Christ they pictured could not have been a creation of their imagination, a fiction—for four men so differently constituted would hardly have invented the same ideal of perfection—and, if not a fiction, then He was historically real, and, if real, He has unsurpassed claims on our attention and gratitude. What Cardinal Wiseman states so forcibly may well be repeated here, as it has been by others when studying the testimony of the evangelists: “We have in the writings of the rabbins ample materials wherewith to construct the model of a perfect Jewish teacher, we have the sayings and the actions of Hiliel and Gamaliel, and Rabbi Samuel, all perhaps, in great part imaginary, but all bearing the impress of national ideas, all formed upon one rule of imaginary perfection. Yet nothing can be more widely apart from their thoughts and principles and actions and character, and those of our Redeemer. Lovers of wrangling controversy, proposers of captious paradoxes, jealous upholders of their nation's exclusive privileges, zealous uncompromising sticklers for the least comma of

the law, and most sophistical departers from its spirit; such mostly are these great men, the exact counterpart and reflections of those scribes and Pharisees who are so uncompromisingly reproved as the very contradiction of gospel principles. How comes it that men, not even learned, contrived to present a character every way departing from their national type, at variance with all those features which custom, and education, and patriotism, and religion, and nature, seemed to have consecrated as of all most beautiful?" * * * "The evangelists must have copied this living model which they represent; and the accordance of the moral features which they give Him can only proceed from the accuracy with which they have respectively drawn Him." In the same direction, Weiss writes: "This cannot be mere human invention; this Jesus must have actually lived in all essential particulars as He is here reported to have done. For that the mind of sinful beings should conceive even the general notion of such a man, would be a miracle; while that such a notion should be carried out with such vividness by authors who were, at all events, originally uneducated, and at first independent of each other, would have been, unless this man had really lived, and had been seen by them, not merely a miracle, but an impossibility."

The Christ of the Gospel, beloved, should be the Christ of our hearts. God hath "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son." But we may learn from this study that, while his image may be substantially the same in each soul, its expression will vary with each life. His manifestation in us will be largely determined by our temperament and personal peculiarities. Some Christians are dry, sharp and angular, like Mark; others are stately, systematic and practical, like Matthew; others are sentimental, poetic and esthetic, like Luke; and others still are mystical, speculative and theological, like John.

There is room for them all. The brother whose religion has something of the business temper in it, and he who yields more to his feelings and fancies, and he who is absorbed in dreamy abstractions and reveries, have all their place, can all be useful, can illustrate the Christ that is in them, and their variety of views may even win others to His service. But this, of course, will be impossible, unless Christ is really enshrined in the soul. It is, therefore, the first duty of the preacher to incline his hearers to welcome the Redeemer as the indwelling source of their moral life. He must not be so very anxious about their uniformity in testimony; for that will be determined by conditions beyond his control. That he may leave to care for itself, and should concentrate his powers on the vital and indispensable. This is my aim in the course of sermons which I propose, and of which this is the first. I desire to aid you in studying Jesus, to help you attain a deeper and more thorough knowledge of His character and mission, that you may accept Him as your Savior, may follow Him as your guide, and may be finally assimilated to His spiritual nature. And if, as the result of these endeavors, I may be permitted to see Him reproduced in your conduct so that you shall be, as you ought to be, living gospels of His grace, however the readings may be varied by philosophy, sentiment, or hard practicalities, I shall rejoice; for the light of His image, streaming through your words and your deeds, shall add new luster to His glory, and shall gently fall with healing loveliness on our sin-smitten and sin-saddened world.

II.

THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

Blessed art thou among women.—*Luke i, 28.*

“ O, Lady of the passions, dost thou weep?

What help can we then through our tears survey.

If such as thou a cause for wailing keep?

What help, what hope, for us, sweet Lady, say?’

‘ Good man, it doth befit thine heart to lay

More courage next it, having seen me so.

All other hearts find other balm to day —

The whole world's consolation is my woe ! ’ ’

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

(Mrs. Browning's translation.)

ON the southern slopes of Lebanon the little city of Nazareth, with its terraced streets, its low, flat-roofed houses, and its radiant flower gardens, adorned with fig trees, olives, and luxuriant vines, slumbers gracefully in a nest of hills. From the highest elevation of this rugged amphitheater, the rock from which our Savior's exasperated countrymen would have cast Him down, a magnificent view is obtained of snow-crowned Hermon to the north, of Carmel and the Mediterranean to the west, of Mount Tabor toward the east, and of the wide-sweeping and once fertile plains of Esdraelon to the south. In this well guarded town, where the air is pure and bracing from the mountain winds, and fragrant from the breath of plants, and musical from the song of birds, and where, if anywhere, traces of Eden's faded glory survive in Nature's loveliness, the sacred narrative begins. There, according to Luke, lived Mary, whom tradition regards as the daughter of Joachim, a Galilean, and of Anna, a native

of Bethlehem, who in their old age, it is said, received her as a gift of the Lord, and to whose service they dedicated her in return. This religious consecration, however, did not prevent an honest suitor, a devout and excellent, though commonplace, man by the name of Joseph, from seeking and gaining a place in her affections. When she is first introduced to us by the inspired annalist, it is as the betrothed of the carpenter-lover, whose wife she was soon to be in fact, as she already was in law. But while waiting the hour that was to mark her departure from the parental roof, an event occurred which changed the current of her thoughts, and invested her character with peculiar sanctity. It was announced to her by the angel Gabriel that she was the chosen of God to be the Virgin-Mother of the promised Messiah, an honor which the women of Israel greatly coveted, and which she meekly accepted, though it exposed her naturally to unjust suspicions and to many bitter reproaches. The angel did not fail to shield her from the scorn and coldness of her husband; neither did Providence, in the accomplishment of its designs, neglect by various miraculous signs to assert her innocence and purity. Compelled by the decree of Augustus providing for a census of the Roman Empire, undoubtedly with a view to taxation,—a decree whose historical authenticity has been vindicated by Neander,—to make the three days' journey to Bethlehem of Judea, Mary, with Joseph, set out, and, worn and weary, arrived safely at her destination. And there, in that little town, six miles south of Jerusalem, famous as the birth-place of David, and centuries after celebrated as the natal spot of Jerome's Latin version of the Scriptures; there, in the humble town, near the barley fields of Boaz, whose ancient name signified "a house of bread," was the second David, the Heavenly Word, the living and imperishable Bread, born to bless and save mankind, while angels, principal-

ties and powers heralded His approach with such songs and messages as awakened hope through all the earth, and drowned in holy melody every base insinuation that had grieved the sensitive heart of the maiden-mother.

To a mind not deeply imbued with Christian doctrine, the marvelous element in this story must seriously impair its credibility. Taken by itself, and viewed in the light of what we know of nature's operations, it can hardly be otherwise regarded than as improbable. However indisposed a critic may be to repeat the coarse charges of *The Toldoth Jesu*, as Voltaire did, he will still feel that he cannot accept the apostolic explanation without doing violence to his reason. In this dilemma he will be found inventing all kinds of amiable fictions to exonerate the Virgin and to preserve the self-respect of his intellect. I shall not attempt to estimate fully the value of such endeavors, but merely suggest that they are of doubtful advantage, as they necessarily challenge the accuracy of the Gospel narrative, and undermine our confidence in its general trustworthiness. The true course to be pursued, in my opinion, is neither to ignore the protest of reason, nor to tamper with the representation of revelation. Final judgment should be suspended. It is evident that the testimony of two or three men can hardly be accepted as sufficient to prove the reality of that which is contradicted by the experience of the race, unless we are previously persuaded of their inspiration; and as to assume that is practically to beg the question in debate, the proof must be made out in some other way. As I have said, final judgment must be reserved. Instead of scrutinizing the character of the witnesses, we must rather scrutinize the Being to whom they witness. We must study Him closely; we must try to classify Him with those whose likeness He bears; and, if these investigations shall lead us to assign to Him a rank unequalled on earth and unsurpassed in

heaven, we shall be warranted in believing the story of His extraordinary birth. A marvelous Being may well have entered the world in a marvelous manner. If, for instance, the doctrine of the incarnation is true, if Divinity was enfolded in humanity, then reason itself will allow that there is nothing incredible in the miraculous conception. The greater wonder necessarily diminishes the proportions of the lesser, and, in comparison, the latter almost descends to the level of commonplace.

Referring, then, the decision of this momentous question to a later discussion in this sermon-series, let us continue our study of Jesus' mother; that we may measure her probable influence on His career, and that we may derive from her example some lessons applicable to woman in her maternal relations, and in those which she sustains to the purity and progress of Christianity.

Men of genius and piety seem never to weary of attributing to a mother's inspiration the excellency they achieve and the triumphs they win. Painters and poets, statesmen and soldiers, heroes and saints, delight in crowning with their victorious wreaths the fair brow of her at whose feet they played. Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, Theodoret, Constantine, and many others prominent in the earlier history of the Church, were trained to greatness by the gentle sway of those who had guided their infant steps; and, in times more recent, the Washingtons, the Napoleons, the Garfields, and hosts of the noblest among the noble, have thankfully acknowledged their indebtedness to the same loving power. Is it not, then, more than likely, that Jesus also was influenced by His mother, and that His character was in some degree affected by her own? We are told that He was subject unto her; we know that the formative period of His life was spent almost exclusively in her society, her husband dying, according to tradition, soon after her Son had passed His

twelfth year; and we may be certain, if, as we are assured by the sacred writers was the case, He accepted the conditions of human growth, that such intimacy could not exist without leaving a permanent impression on His mind and heart. I am not, however, acquainted with any author who has taken as fully into account this motherly influence in his estimate of Jesus as he should, the friends of His Divinity apparently fearing that too many concessions on this point might be construed adversely to their favorite dogma, and the adherents of His mere creaturehood singularly overlooking its importance. These fears are groundless; for, surely, if being born of a woman is compatible with His alleged Divinity, being nurtured and developed by a woman cannot reasonably be regarded as inconsistent with it; and they certainly are useless, for they will not prevent critical minds, when seeking to solve the problem of Christ's spiritual greatness, from exhausting the natural before they appeal to the supernatural.

In determining how far Mary may be credited with what Jesus was and with what He did, we must familiarize ourselves with what Mary was herself, and likewise with what she did. And here we are liable to be misled by the legends which surround her, and by the pictures which idealize and exalt her. The first, we know, are utterly worthless, bearing on their front the mark of pious mendacity, having no other warrant than the authority of superstitious and designing priests; and the second has no other foundation than the free fancy of mediæval painters. Romanism has exalted the Virgin to a position in the Church and Heaven hardly inferior, if not superior, to that ascribed to her Son; has declared her absolute sinlessness from the womb; has organized in her honor an elaborate worship, and has reared to her name more altars than are dedicated in its sacred temples to the Godhead; and it has cultivated the belief that she visibly reveals herself to the eyes of

the faithful, while her less merciful Son veils Himself from sight in the splendid obscurities of eternity. To these ecclesiastical fictions art unfortunately has lent itself, and has done much by its brilliant triumphs to give them currency. Schlegel informs us that Garofalo's Madonna offers a most perfect ideal of serious Divinity. That is, his picture is devoted to the actualization of the Romish conception. Those of us who have seen Raphael's magnificent composition at Dresden, in which the Virgin Mother hovers in the clouds, must have been impressed by the godlike sublimity of her countenance and the mysterious stateliness of her manner. Likewise, in the famous "Madonna di Foligno" by the same artist, she is surrounded with the nimbus, and appears to be wholly a creature of celestial origin; and Dürer, in his great painting on the same subject, preserved in the Dresden gallery, exalts the Virgin above the earth, places the moon beneath her feet, and glorifies her brow with the descending crown of Heaven. These wonderful representations, wonderful as art productions, have tended to strengthen the theological errors of the Papacy, and they have almost entirely obscured the character of Mary as it is given in the Gospels. If we would be delivered from illusions, and see her as she really was, we must break away from the painters and appeal to the evangelists, and then we shall find that she was a woman such as Mrs. Browning so eloquently describes, from whose lips it was natural such words should fall as the poetess indites:

"I am not proud — *not proud!*
Albeit in my flesh God sent His Son,
Albeit over Him my head is bowed
As others bow before Him, still mine heart
Bows lower than their knees. O centuries
That roll, in vision, your futurities
My future grave athwart —

Whose murmurs seem to reach me while I keep
Watch o'er this sleep —
Say of me as the Heavenly said, 'Thou art
The blessedest of women!'—blessedest,
Not holiest, not noblest — no high name,
Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame,
When I sit meek in Heaven."

Mary is presented to us in the New Testament simply as a woman, undoubtedly a remarkable woman, but still only a woman. The reflection of her image on its pages suggests at once the idea of unsullied purity; and we feel how deserved is the encomium quoted by Michelet: "She shone forth as dazzling snow, which the eye could hardly look at." Her devoutness is also apparent. She trusts the word of the angel, she accepts the will of God, and loses sight of her own peril in the hoped-for deliverance of her people. There is nothing of frenzy in her piety, nor harshness, nor gloominess. It is not fanatical, like the Sibyl's, nor stern like Iphigenia's, nor frigid like the Vestal's. She is last seen, in the sacred narrative, waiting with the Disciples for the descent of the Spirit; and thus, at the close of her life, as at the beginning, she evinces her confidence in the promises of God. (*Luke i and Acts i.*) When she replies to the salutation of Elizabeth, we discover, shining through her words, a faith that is warm, joyous, radiant and musical. Her religion is sunny, cheerful, hopeful, and yet withal it is deeply thoughtful. The Magnificat reveals a mind given to reflection, and one familiar with the ancient Scriptures. (*Compare I Sam. ii, 1-10, with Luke i, 46-55.*) Hannah's exultant strains seem to have awakened the Virgin's song, and to have decided the direction of its flight; but the freedom of its measure indicates a soul as capable of ordering its own ideas as of appreciating the ideas of others. The meaning of the shepherds' visit to the babe

she is said to have pondered in her heart, as at a later day she did the mysterious words of her Son, and at other times her attitude is one of serious meditation. (*Luke ii, 19 and 51.*)

According to these delineations, Mary was not a shallow, frivolous, flimsy, worldly woman, but one fully qualified by earnestness, intelligence and godliness to mold aright the character of her child. And in doing this she evinces what we would expect from such a woman, the greatest tact and the deepest sympathy. When she sought the youthful Jesus in Jerusalem, the authority she asserted she gently exercised, as recognizing in Him a spirit which needed to be governed reverently and tenderly. She indulges in no harsh epithets and in no ungenerous reflections on His apparent precociousness, but lovingly wins Him back to filial obedience by the dignity of her manner and the mildness of her reproaches. The same judiciousness distinguishes her after her Son enters upon His public ministry. At the wedding in Cana His manner seems to have grown reserved towards her, but she seems intuitively to realize how heavily burdened His head and heart must be with the weighty concerns of His mission, and, therefore, to have taken no offense, and to have been only anxious to shield Him from the vain questionings of others. Never does she interfere with His work; rarely does she embarrass Him with her presence; and when she does, it is rather to express her fears for His safety than to encumber Him with the officiousness of her advice. (*See Luke ii, 48-52; John ii, 5; Matthew xii, 46; Luke viii, 19.*) On these occasions it is really her sympathy that calls her forth from retirement. She discovers His perils, has dim forebodings of His violent end, and never appears to forget the sword of which the angel spoke, and which was to pierce her own soul likewise. Holman Hunt, in his picture, "The Shadow of the

Cross," represents Jesus in His home at Nazareth, standing in a position which, when shadowed on the wall, takes the form of a cross, while His mother in the foreground is seen to be gazing intently on its threatening outlines. The thought of the artist is doubtless just; but that shadow must have fallen on her pathway at an earlier period; for when, as Mrs. Browning expresses it, she held her "darling on her knee," "the drear, sharp tongue of prophecy," with the words, "despised—rejected," must have been recalled, and must have led her mentally if not orally to exclaim:

"Bright angels—move not! lest ye stir the cloud
Betwixt my soul and His futurity!"

How could she do otherwise than sympathize with her Son, and how could she refrain from its manifestation, when enemies multiplied around His way? Ah! we may well believe that she travailed with Him in pain from the first, drank deep of His sorrows, had fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and, in the supreme hour of His agony, when she stood close to His cross, desired to sustain Him by the faithfulness of her love. We may believe this, and we may likewise believe that when she received His pallid corpse, she gave expression to her grief in words such as the Greek poet has happily coined for her: "O, blessed brows, embraced by the thorn-wreath which is pricking at my heart! O mouth, wherein was no guile, yet betrayed by the traitor's kiss! O Giver of life from the dead, liest Thou dead before mine eyes? Must I, who said 'hush' beside Thy cradle, wail this passion upon Thy grave? I, who washed Thee in Thy first bath, must I drop on Thee these hotter tears? I, who raised Thee high in my maternal arms—but *then* Thou leapedst—then Thou springedst up in Thy child play!" (See Mrs. Browning's *Greek Christian Poets*.)

Such a mother must have exerted a marked influence

on the character of her child. To question it would be to question the reality of His humanity. Taken alone, she may not account for the whole of Jesus; but it would be unfair to deny that she accounts for part. We see something kindred to her devoutness, gentleness, tenderness, her veneration for the Word of God, and her calm confidence in God himself reproduced in her Son. That these virtues shone more resplendently in Him than in her is admitted, and that their perfection may be difficult, if not impossible, to harmonize with the theory of His creaturehood is conceded; but these admissions do not militate in the least against the position that they were fostered and developed by her example and training. This much we may safely assume; and this much is not without its lesson and encouragement for mothers. As Mary guided the boy Jesus, so the maternal hand in all ages and nations directs the steps of childhood. The world is what women make it; for they deal with humanity in its most impressible stages, and the principles then inculcated are probably the most enduring. It is natural that they should be anxious concerning the right performance of a work so momentous, and that they should inquire of those who have gone before them for counsel to aid them in their perplexities. Well may all such look to Mary. She will teach them what virtues to cultivate and what methods to employ, in rendering their lives of permanent value to their children. If they ask what they should be, she will answer: Devout, sunny, musical in thoughts and feelings, considerate, tender and sympathetic; for how can they lead their offspring to God unless they themselves are His followers, and how can they train them to cheerful obedience and intelligent action unless they themselves are radiant and reflective in duty? If they ask what they should do, she answers: Be observant of the peculiarities of your children, study their ways, do not drive too direct-

ly or too violently to your ends; do not ridicule or deride them, but adapt yourselves to their weaknesses, charm them into obedience, and by your abundant sympathy with them in their trials, ambitions and disappointments, secure the homage of both their head and heart. This is safe counsel. If applied, the result cannot fail to be beneficial. All that is expected may not be realized, but much that would otherwise be inevitable will be averted. The worst character will be better than it would be if in early years it has enjoyed these advantages, and the possibility of its improvement will be enhanced by their recollection. Another Christ will not spring from these means, for, through all the ages, no other has, — enough to convince us that there was something in Him higher and different from ordinary humanity, — but Christians may; and next to the blessedness of bearing the Christ is the blessedness of multiplying His disciples.

And this thought leads to another. Mary, by her relation to Christianity, speaks to women as women, as well as to mothers. She reminds them of their influence on religion, and of their responsibility for its perpetuity. It is a curious and instructive fact that their sway and power were recognized by ancient and even superstitious faiths. The Artemis of the Greeks, daughter of Jupiter, identical with the Diana of the Latins, was a female divinity whose favor was sought by all, but especially by the young. Athena, the Roman Minerva, who sprang full-armed from the brow of her mighty father Zeus, was worshiped in all parts of Greece, and was the patron-goddess of Athens; and to them both were such prayers addressed as the suppliant offers in *Æschylus*, "Chaste daughter of Zeus, thou whose calm eye is never troubled, look down upon us! Virgin, defend the virgins." Hestia among the Greeks, and Vesta among the Romans, were represented by the sacred fire, teaching that the flame of piety, like that other flame

which rises on the hearth, must be kindled and maintained by woman's care. Similar traditions prevailed among the Germans and the Scandinavians, and, indeed, the Northern nations have generally regarded the wife as the priestess of the family. Consistently with these views, female morality was carefully guarded by the ancients. The Romans in their better days would not permit their women to taste wine. The famous Bona Dea, according to Lecky, was a wife named Fatua, remarkable for her purity, who, in an evil hour, violated the Roman law, and, being found intoxicated, was scourged to death by her husband. He afterward repented of his haste, and paid her divine honors; but the story goes to show how intolerant the times were of any kind of defilement in woman. It is related of the German wives, whose husbands were conquered by Marius, that, their request to become servants of the Vestals being denied, they committed suicide, rather than incur the danger of personal contamination—a story that illustrates how thoroughly the prevailing sentiment had mastered the conscience of the weaker sex as of the stronger. Now, in what other way can these ideas and customs be accounted for than that already suggested? They can be explained by the conviction that the religious life of a nation is inseparable from faith, piety, and purity in woman, and that for her to abandon its altars and cease to frequent its temples must result in the ruin of both. Any other explanation is inadequate. But if we are in doubt of its soundness, we need only refer to the annals of primitive Christianity. The Gospels and Epistles record her abundant and successful labors in its behalf. There we find no jealousy of her influence, and no plans to circumscribe her power. Profane history likewise chronicles her self-sacrificing endeavors, and the names of Helena, Flacilla, Pulcheria, Fabiola, Paula, and of many others are honored as friends

of Jesus. Up to the year 369 she occupied official stations in the Church, but in that year in the Council of Laodicea priestly dominance prevailed against her, and in the fifth century three other councils completed her humiliation. Of late, however, these wrongs are being remedied, and the Church is returning to the juster faith of olden times; and everywhere is it being acknowledged that the zeal, tact, tenderness, and energy of woman are indispensable to Christianity, and must be permitted free scope if Christianity is to advance and triumph.

My sisters, power and influence involve responsibility. On this point Mary's example speaks to you. She accepted the position assigned her by Providence, though it entailed shame and suffering, as well as honor, and though it rendered her unpleasantly conspicuous. Looking through the ages on her calm and placid countenance, as she accepts her mission from God, learn to take up your duty, quietly, firmly, and in His fear. See to it, first of all, that you, too, are mothers of Christ—of Christ born in your heart, the hope of glory—and then, in the spirit derived from Him, devote yourselves as earnestly to His cause as the Virgin was devoted to His person. Then will your obligations be met, and then will religion be prospered and humanity be blessed; and then as the Parthenon, Athens' grandest temple, was dedicated to Athens' purest goddess, shall Christianity, the temple of God, forever show forth the praise of woman.

III.

THE PREPARATION OF JESUS.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.—*Luke ii, 52.*

APOCHRYPHAL gospels, inspired by fanatical zeal and fanciful ignorance, ascribe to Jesus during his earlier years such marvels as they in their shallowness deem appropriate to his super-earthly origin. According to their report the boy was a prodigy—a youthful magician or thaumaturgist—who delighted in mystifying and startling His associates by the display of His wondrous powers. He is represented as carrying water in His robe, as molding birds of clay, and as clapping His hands to make them fly; as acting superciliously and impertinently toward Joseph, His reputed father, and His teachers; as turning some of His playmates into kids, and as striking others of them dead with a curse—stories which, if they could be credited, would only prove that their precocious hero was a very superficial, ill-behaved, and contemptible character. It is a satisfaction to know that there is no foundation in fact for these preposterous and silly legends, and that He whom they seek to honor, but in truth degrade, was not conspicuous in His childhood for anything beyond the quiet and natural development of mind and body recorded in the text.

In ignoring these idle traditions, and writing as they do of physical and mental growth, the evangelists place beyond question the reality and completeness of Christ's humanity. It is said by Paul that Jesus "took on Him

the seed of Abraham," and was "in all things" made "like unto His brethren;" also, that He "learned obedience," and was made "perfect through sufferings"—statements in exact accord with the simple but significant narration of Luke. Whatever may be true of His Divinity—and the Apostle evidently has it in full view when he represents Him as choosing the nature in which He will appear among men, for a creature cannot predetermine the form of his creaturehood—He was in all essential respects a being like ourselves. He grew weary, He was strengthened by an angel, He suffered, He hungered, He thirsted, He had positive desires which He expressed, and He experienced a sorrow of soul which he acknowledged was even unto death. (*See Heb. i, 10, 16, 17; v. 8, 9; Luke xxii, 42, 43; Mark xiv, 34.*) Jesus then, whatever else He was, assuredly was man; not merely man in physical structure, but in soul as well. That is, we are not to think, as some have argued, that His personality was purely divine, the divine being the sole animating principle of His body; but rather, that, like others of the race, He possessed a proper human spirit, which, though mysteriously allied with a higher nature, was capable of being trained, enlightened, expanded—educated. This conclusion, although manifestly warranted by the explicit teaching of Scripture, some timid people hesitate to accept and try to evade. They imagine it to be derogatory to His more exalted rank, and freighted with mischief to the entire Christian scheme. And yet what can we do? We must either disregard the express utterances of the Gospel, and incur the suspicion of being more anxious to subserve a theory than to ascertain the truth; or we must assume that the flesh of Jesus was all that advanced in wisdom, which is an evident solecism; or, what is even a graver absurdity and greater contradiction, that the changeless and infinitely wise Deity is mutable and improvable; or, we

must receive what is written, and believe that Jesus had a soul conditioned like our own, and, like our own, susceptible to cultivation. It will not do to admit the reality of His human soul and then deny the reality of its progressiveness; for such denial destroys its kinship with the spiritual in other men, and forces us to advocate the untenable hypothesis that the infant Jesus was at His birth mentally and morally of full stature; that the body of the babe was from the beginning linked with the mind of the sage; and that He was never a child except in a physical sense. Such conceptions are incongruous and irrational, and, for one, I repudiate them. Taking the Gospels for our guide, and common-sense for our rule of interpretation, we cannot fail to believe that the intellect of Jesus ripened as His body matured; that His knowledge increased, His powers expanded, and His varied spiritual graces gradually unfolded. It need not be objected that this implies increase of moral worthiness, for it involves no such difficulty. From innocence He grew into righteousness, from holiness of being into holiness of doing; but, as the diamond is intrinsically as priceless before it is faceted as after, and as the golden ingot is essentially the same as the golden coin, so the native purity of our Lord was just as perfect at the first as it was at the last, when its radiance shone forth in conduct, and when it was minted into the currency of blameless action.

During some thirty years this educational process was going on; and if, during that period, the outward life of Jesus seems barren of results, inwardly it was certainly fruitful. Externally it may have been as the winter's snow, but, beneath the snow, blossoms and flowers were making ready for the spring. In fixing this boundary line, we do not commit ourselves to the denial of subsequent development, but merely desire to designate the time spent in preparation for His ministry. That ministry brought its

own schooling and its own lessons, and these are worthy of consideration in their place; but, as we usually regard the necessary training for a vocation specifically as education, we may be allowed here to employ the term in this conventional way, restricting its application to what took place in fitting our Savior for His work. Two things were necessary: That He attain to the consciousness of Himself, of His calling, and of the character of His mission; and, secondly, that His mind be enlightened and all His spiritual powers be unfolded and strengthened, so that He Himself might be honored and His mission be fulfilled. On these aspects of His preparation it cannot but be profitable to meditate, as they will familiarize us more fully with Jesus as He was, and may suggest some practical thoughts applicable to our own life as it is.

Neander, in his historical account of Christ, says: "We cannot believe that the full consciousness of a Divine call, which he displayed in His later years, was of sudden growth." He traces its dawning to His youth, and follows it to the time when it seems to have been completed at His baptism, or just before. Ebrard, referring to that ceremony, says: "In the development of His consciousness He had just reached that point in which He clearly apprehended the vocation given Him by His Father." Krummacher, Lange, Robertson, Horace Bushnell, and other eminent theologists substantially adopt this view; and I cannot see, if what has been stated regarding His humanity be admitted, how it can be questioned. It is inconceivable that as a babe He should have had the consciousness of a man, or that He should have realized His mysterious relation to a higher Being. Much more rational the theory that, from His childhood, self-knowledge advanced, at first slowly, then more rapidly, until a climax was reached just before He stepped out of His obscurity and made the public avowal of His Messiahship. As the mariner, who

for weeks has traversed the indefiniteness and monotonousness of ocean, discerns at last what seems to his eyes banks of fog on the horizon's verge, but which slowly change into the faint outlines of hills and cities, and then, on some clear morning, suddenly emerge from the mist in shapes distinct and sharp; so Jesus, from the blank and vague domain of infancy, gradually enters the more transparent world of boyhood, in which He gets a glimpse of personal relations, dignities, and missions, and then continues His voyage toward manhood mid ever-increasing light, and in the fullness of that light obtains at last a perfect view of all that He is in Himself, all that He is to God, and all that He is to man. The episode in His early life which occurred at Jerusalem, confirms the propriety of this illustration. At that time He appears to have had a confused and partial idea of His supernatural origin and wonderful destiny, and replies to His mother's inquiry: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—that is, "engaged in the things of my Father"—language which implies that He perceived, in part, at least, His true position in the world's history, and felt within His soul strange intimations of approaching greatness. But that this apprehension of Himself, and this insight into the future were not final, and were not unobscured, may be inferred from the fact that He resumes His modest station in the family, returns to the commonplace pursuits of Nazareth, and gives no sign for eighteen years. He had seen in a glass darkly, and then the image seems to have been blurred; but finally He comes to see face to face, or face answering to face. From feeling and thinking as a child, at last He feels and thinks as a man, and, when He does so, He puts away childish things, and speaks, yea, and acts, as a man.

The development of his consciousness we cannot follow through its various stages, but we can form, from His subsequent claims and conduct, an idea of its character.

He must have recognized in Himself what we ourselves feel as human souls, the reality of personal existence, the being and authority of God, and the certainty of immortality. Most likely the sense of these sublimities was more vivid in Him than in us, as it was undoubtedly associated with an interior revelation of a greatness with which there is nothing to compare in mortals. Gradually it dawned upon His mind that He was the child of promise, the Being toward whom the eyes of preceding generations had been turned, the Messiah of prophecy, the Jesus of Jehovah. As such, He must have felt strange powers stirring in Him, and must have realized the possession of practically limitless resources. The outward marvels of His life, from the miracle of the marriage to that of the resurrection, must have been before His consciousness as possibilities ere they were before the world as actualities. His intimate and wonderful relations with the Infinite must likewise have been known to Him. He refers to them in His ministry. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me," was the burden of His most impressive discourse. Frequently in His teaching the same thought occurs, though in other forms; and throughout we may discern His recognition of a nature abiding in Him that is not of earth. He moves, He speaks, He works, as one whose humanity is strangely blended with Divinity, and as one with whom is a Presence which the Heaven of heavens cannot contain. But there is another side to this consciousness. Realizing His Messianic office, He must also have realized the awful condition of things that made it necessary, and the terrible ordeal through which He must pass to effect deliverance. That is, He must have felt the world's lost and wretched state, must have borne on His heart not only its sorrows but its sins, and sympathetically must have tasted the bitterness

of its shame. As a parent cannot but take to himself the dishonor of his offspring, and cannot but share the anguish of his child, so Jesus, being what He was, could not but have a suffering sense of the loathsomeness of every iniquity that has outraged the race, and of the painfulness of every affliction that has desolated its affections. Picture to yourselves this Being, burdened with every woe, every calamity, and every evil that has befallen humanity, and so identifying Himself with the race that its sinfulness and sorrowfulness are to Him as though they were His own ; and then picture Him as sensible of His mission, consecrated by God to the holy but awful work of finding a way of escape for the guilty, and of providing consolation and succor for the distressed, and as seeing the weary, thorny, bloody road He must travel, even the way of the cross, to win redemption for mankind, and you will have a fair, if not an exhaustive, conception of the state of mind in which our Lord confronted the approach of the hour when His vocation must begin. Like the eye, which at a glance takes in the magnificence of the stellar heavens and the horrors of the battlefield, the soul of Jesus at the same moment was filled with the splendors of Infinitude and the indescribable sufferings of the finite, and with His own approaching agony as associated with the latter by ties of brotherhood.

Evidently while this preparation for His future ministry was going forward, the evolution of character was also taking place. The faculties and powers of His soul must have unfolded, as the bud opens into the flower, and as the promise of dawn grows into the radiance of noon. We find Him on the threshold of His public career what He is at the close—thoughtful, self-collected, serene, resolute in purpose, clear in judgment, prompt in action, eloquent in speech, affectionate in spirit, and dignified in manner. He does not bring an undisciplined intellect to

His mighty work, but one drilled and fitted to encounter the most skillful and determined of adversaries. He does not attempt to measure strength with the hosts of darkness until He has equipped Himself for the conflict. Nothing is undertaken prematurely or carelessly. Jesus tempers the steel before He draws the sword; He hardens His hand before He puts the share in the ground; He sharpens the ax before He raises it against the tree, and is sure of His powder before He attempts to blast the rock. From the moment that He steps into public view, the people realize that He is no novice. They call Him "Master," "Rabbi," and even His enemies admit his wonderful superiority, and question among themselves, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" "And whence hath He this wisdom and these mighty works?"

The inquiries of His perplexed countrymen suggest a very important line of thought. That Jesus did not enter on His ministry without adequate preparation is apparent. The character of that preparation is equally clear. But it is not as evident how, by what means, through what agencies, it was accomplished. He certainly was not educated in the higher schools of the land, had never enjoyed the advantages of advanced instruction, had never been a pupil of any of the Rabbis, and had never attached Himself to any of the sects—either to Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes—and could not, therefore, have been indebted to them for His training. Probably He was taught, as other Hebrew children were, the moral and ceremonial laws of Judaism. This was customary, and there is no reason why an exception should have been made in His case. Doubtless He attended, with those of His own age, the synagogue of His town, where, according to Josephus, the scholars were "taught to read, and to walk in the ways of the Law, and to know the deeds of their fathers." But this primary instruction, compara-

ble to that now received in the lower grade of common schools, was not sufficient to equip Him for His work. The explanation must be sought in other directions, and mainly in Himself; that is, Jesus was in the truest sense a self-made man. He disciplined His own powers, developed His own energies, and was the architect of His own character. Of course, there were influences that surrounded Him, and circumstances that affected Him, and opportunities that opened up before Him; but the appropriation of the first, the improvement of the second, and the appreciation of the third were determined by Himself. The difference between a self-made man and one that is *manufactured* is not so much in the advantages they possess as in their ability to master them. The former is independent and self-reliant, and will force an education out of everything, and almost out of nothing, while the latter is only educated to the degree that others succeed in thrusting on him knowledge and culture. Jesus ranks with the self-made, because, with the exception of His mother and his early teachers — narrow-minded and prejudiced Jews — no one had anything to do with the forming of His mind, and, therefore, what He was must be attributed to His own vigor and wisdom in employing the materials that lay at His hand.

The beautiful and holy life of His mother must have profoundly impressed Him; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that He acquired from her some of the graces that distinguished Him. Probably from her lips in the days of His youth or early manhood He learned the marvelous story of His birth; and this, answering to something in Him, may have ministered to the development of His Messianic consciousness. He likewise must have been influenced in the same direction by the Word of God; for he evidently was a student of its sacred pages, and He could hardly have fed on its teachings without recognizing

more clearly His own origin, calling and destiny. But thousands have had godly parents and have never grown purer, and thousands have had the Bible and never grown wiser. The difference between them and Jesus is, that while they attached no adequate value to their privileges, and sought no personal advantage from them, He prized what God had conferred, and enriched Himself with the treasure. To Him the Scriptures were precious; and the study of them served to discipline His intellect, kindle His imagination, and fire His soul, as it has in multitudes of other instances. Nor is it unlikely that Nature also contributed, in some degree, to call forth His greatness. The scenery of Galilee is famous for its beauty. From His childhood He must have been familiar with the magnificent panorama of lake and mountain, of wooded Naph-tali and purple Carmel, of Gilboa's heights and Endor's plains, and of the spots made doubly interesting by historic associations. The armies of the Amalekites, of the Egyptians, of the Assyrians, of the Greeks, and of the Romans had encamped in the valleys near His home, and there momentous battles had been fought, and memorable events had occurred. In His wanderings and meditations these scenes, with actions and personages connected with them, must have passed before Him and have spoken to Him with those voices which sensitive souls yet recognize as sounding through the works of God and deeds of men. Contemplating specially these Divine works for many years, He may, in part, have become assimilated to them, the rocks imparting their strength to His will, the valleys their expansiveness to His charity, and the flowers their grace to His righteousness. Yea, they may even have gladdened the hidden Deity tabernacling in Him, as they did on Creation's morning, and they may have drawn from Him a revelation of His indwelling presence, even

as they ever tend to discover whatever of God yet remains in the poor human heart.

To these influences, also, may be added those of His social surroundings. While the Jews of Nazareth were very decided Jews, the population of the town was mixed. From the time that Solomon gave the district to Hiram, King of Tyre, many strangers had resided there — chiefly, according to Strabo, Syrians, Phœnicians and Arabs — and on this account Isaiah had called it “Galilee of the Gentiles.” The great road, spoken of anciently as “the way of the sea,” from Damascus to Ptolemais, ran just behind Nazareth; the Roman highway from Syria lay through the town itself, and another to Judea and Egypt skirted the hill on which it stood. Caravans constantly passed the little city, bringing the representatives of many nationalities in contact with its citizens. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Jesus held intercourse with these merchants and traders; that occasionally there may have been found among them philosophers traveling from one point to another, from whom He may have gathered information, and it is probable that the fraternity of commerce may have fostered His cosmopolitan views, and have suggested the higher brotherhood of humanity. That He should have been thus affected and aided by these means is not, however, explained by the means themselves, but by what He was in Himself. Others were related to them as He was, but only one Jesus appeared. He, and He alone made them tributary to his personal development, and that through the native grandeur of His soul, aided doubtless by the Holy Spirit who, we are told, “dwelt in Him without measure,” and who is comprehensively described as “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might,” and who not only must have stimulated His original endowments, but must have re-

vealed to His consciousness the essential wonders of His Being and Vocation.

Young friends,—for to you I speak particularly—accept this word of application: Life lies before you, and you are approaching the hour when you must enter on its duties and its varied experiences. Let the example of Jesus constrain you to prepare. Thousands on thousands idle their youth away, despise its opportunities for improvement, and pass into the conflict unarmed, undrilled, undisciplined and consequently are ready to fall an easy prey to the destroyer. The remedy is—self-education. If you would attain success in any calling or profession, equipment for it must precede its pursuit; and if life as a whole is to be grandly triumphant, the same course must be adopted. You must develop your mental resources, must inform your mind, must enlighten your judgment, must master your appetites, must sanctify your heart—in a word, must attain manhood, if you would fight a man's battles and win a man's victories. To make this preparation you must be conscious of your needs and your deficiencies. On the one side, you must realize the imperfection of your moral nature and your absolute dependence upon God, and on the other, you must seek to appreciate the soul's greatness and aim to attain Divine approval. And this two-fold endeavor and the results which should follow lie within your own power. You must build your own character in time, and in so doing, will fashion your destiny for all eternity. Every man in reality is self-made, self-made whether for good or ill, and not even the Almighty can make him other than he wills. Contemplate, then, seriously your responsibility, and, like Jesus, use the means that are near you—for they are abundant—and you will be able to fit yourself for the position Providence assigns you in the world. Study the Scriptures, and they will reveal yourself to yourself, and

will help to mold your character in righteousness; consider God's works, and they will expand your soul and will minister to the elevation of your desires; confide in Christ, and He will make known to you your inherent dignity, and will transform you into His image; and scrutinize your fellow-mortals, and they will teach you, by their vicissitudes, what to avoid and what to follow. Employ these means wisely, vigorously, and look for the Holy Spirit to aid and direct you in their use, and, like Jesus, you will be prepared to take up the mission of life and to conduct it to a victorious close. But if they are neglected, if youth is wasted, and if precious opportunities are rejected, the spendthrift's shame will assuredly crown the spendthrift's folly. Remember:

“The hypocritic days,

* * * *

Bring diadems or fagots in their hands.

To each they offer gifts after his will —

Bread, kingdoms, stars, and heaven that holds them all.

I, in my pleach'd garden, watched the pomp,

Forgot my morning wishes, hastily

Took a few herbs and apples, and the day

Turned and departed silent: I too late

Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.”

IV.

THE HARBINGER OF JESUS.

This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before thee.—*Matthew, xi, 10.*

THE blast of the sirocco foretokens the coming of spring, the crash of the avalanche proclaims the advent of summer, the ephemeral blossoms of orchards announce the birth-hour of fruit, and the transient gray of the morning presages the glory of day, as the star of the evening predicts the silver bestudding of night. An advance guard precedes the main body of armies, the blazonry of heralds betokens the progress of royalty, and the ring of the ax and the fall of the tree prepare the way for the permanent upbuilding of civilization. Great men, like great princes, have harbingers also, and new revolutions, like new civilizations, have their signs and forerunners. John Huss, in Bohemia, and Wycliffe, in England, foreshadowed the coming of Luther; and Marat and Robespierre were ominous both of the rise and the ravages of the mighty Napoleon. And thus the appearance of Jesus, the Messiah of God, was foretold by the prophets, and His speedy approach by the voice of the Baptist. From the times of the ancients it had been declared that the path for His feet should be straightened by the labors of one who should preach in the spirit of Elijah, the prophet. As the overture introduces the play, vaguely hints at its plot, dimly suggests the course of its action, and prepares the spectator for the strife of its heroes and the triumph of virtue, so the harbinger was to usher in

the Messiah, forecast His work, obscurely depict the line of His conduct, and incline the heart of the people to welcome His presence and submit to His law. And, as the overture is brief and is speedily lost in forgetfulness, its sweetness being drowned in the drama's excitement, so the herald's commission is swiftly concluded and his greatness eclipsed by the light of his master. Like a windstorm that exhausts itself rapidly and gives way to the calm, like the fire that blazes on high, desolating, destroying, and then sinks quickly again, John startled the world and hastily declined before the dawning splendor of Jesus; and, like the lamp to which he compares himself, having shed his gleam on the feet of his Master, he flickers and dies, while his Master rises up like a sun, filling earth with His glory, and, like the "midnight sun" described by Du Chaillu, bathes all who receive Him in daylight continuous.

The Baptist was born in Hebron, a town on the verge of the wilderness, 3,000 feet above the Mediterranean, from which elevation the golden peaks of the Temple could be seen to the north, rising from among the streets of Jerusalem. It was there that Abraham purchased from Ephron a place for his dead; it was there, in the cave called Machpelah, that the patriarchs were buried; it was there that the oak-grove of Mamre spread its cooling shade, where Abraham also builded an altar to God; it was there that Anak and his giant sons defended themselves; it was there that Caleb beheld the fruit of the vine, which enraptured his eyes and gladdened his heart; and it was there that the earliest Judean civilization found its home and established its throne. In this little city lived Zacharias, the priest, and his wife Elizabeth, the parents of John. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." But, alas! they were childless—considered in

their day a grievous calamity. God did not, however, abandon them to this reproach, but in their old age conferred on them the gift of a son, a son who should be called "the Prophet of the Highest," and who should "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." Receiving this trust with joyous gratitude, they doubtless named their boy with a view to his sacred vocation, and revealing to him the supernatural communications that accompanied his birth, they cultivated in him a spirit of consecration worthy his exalted destiny. Influenced by the instruction and example of his parents, by the traditions connected with the town of his nativity, and by the prevailing expectations of the people regarding the near approach of the Messiah, John must gradually have developed in a line with the angel's description of his character. But the more fully he realized in himself the spirit of his prototype, Elijah, the less was he reconciled to life in Hebron, to its secular worries and commonplaces, to its pagan invaders and enemies, and to its vulgar inquisitiveness concerning himself. Hence, at an early period in his career, he separated himself from home and friends and plunged into the desert.

Beginning not far from Jerusalem, the wilderness which received the harbinger extends eastward and southward, bordering the Dead Sea, and penetrating Idumæa. It is marked by jagged rocks, verdureless wastes, deep ravines, yawning chasms, and dreary caverns. Everywhere traces of upheaval, earthquake, and tempest are apparent, and the entire region well deserves the name given to it by the Hebrews—"The Appalling Desolation." There, especially, in a vale called Engedi, colonies of ascetic Essenes were established, whose aim was to escape defilement by isolation. In these vast solitudes they could give themselves to meditation, could maintain some degree of spiritual freedom, and could preserve themselves from the

polluting touch of the Roman power, whose eagles profaned the most sacred places. While John never seems to have joined himself to these communities, and certainly never adopted their views—for, unlike them, he ultimately mingles with publicans and sinners—he so far sympathized with them as to accept their mode of life, and for a season secluded himself from the strife and noisy ambitions of society.

Michelet says that the object of the sage, in taking up his abode in the lonely mountain, was to disengage himself from the world, and from the well worn furrows of old routine—to free himself from the pressure and entanglement of the crowd, and from the tyranny of his own nature. There the soul uprises from the dark night of its sensual tomb, and, like the dawn breaking through heavy mists, reveals the serene grandeur of its purer and better self. Alone—shut off from all earthly sounds and earthly sights, save those which monotonous dreariness presents—it seems to traverse the infinite. The very air of the desert, when charged with the ominous wailings of the tempest, imparts a preternatural depth to the feelings, and, in the stillness of solemn night, bathes the perturbed spirit in holy calm. There, where the living may not intrude, the dead are present. Solitude is peopled with the great and good of former generations, and its shadows take the forms of dear ones who have left us, and in its stillness we feel again the touch of a hand that is cold, and the sound of a voice that is hushed. As Landor has it, “Solitude is the audience-chamber of God. It is also the meeting-place of the living and the dead. Then, in its calm, can we not measure better than in the noise of the world the real value of the things we strive for? Nearness to the objects blinds us to their character. When we are alone we soon find that the crown we have won is not worth the battle—that the harvest is not worth

the toil." John doubtless realized these things. There, in the hospitable sterility of the wilderness, beneath the deep clear eyes of the Syrian stars, he doubtless attained to the most perfect communion with God, held fellowship with the heroic deeds of his people, obtained complete mastery over himself, and prepared to rush irresistibly into the vortex of the world's maddened movements. There the great idea of his ministry, which was to seize on the public mind and carry whole generations onward and upward, unquestionably grew so distinct and dominant that he longed for the hour when he should step forth from his retirement, to proclaim the coming of Him who should "turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

The hour came at last. How he heard its stroke we know not. But this we know: When expectancy was ripe, when social evils had reached a climax, and when the darkness was deepening into thickest night, the attention of the people was directed to the wilderness. In a desert God had given His law; in a desert such heroes as Moses and Elijah had been disciplined for service, and now, through the stony portals of the desert, a strange voice was heard exclaiming; "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Multitudes hastened to the scene, and there they found an attenuated figure, clothed with a rough garment of camel's hair, whose pallid brows were shaded by long, matted hair, and whose emaciated cheeks were covered with a tattered beard. He was slowly moving northward along the course of the Jordan, in whose waters he was baptizing the people. He pauses at Bethabara—the Bethabara of our maps—and then proceeds towards Galilee, as though expecting to meet some one, and stops again at a spot where the river Jabbok flows into the Jordan. Along the tortuous road the crowds surge and follow, the places of those who return to their homes being rapidly filled by others eager to see

and hear. The country is ablaze with excitement, and even the authorities are extraordinarily moved, and send deputies to inquire concerning him. They knew not but he might be another Judas, the Galilean, who had headed a revolt; or, indeed, he might be the Messiah Himself; at least it was important to know from whence he came and what he purposed. But to the anxious throngs who hung upon his words, and to the inquiring priests and levites alike, he had but one duty to preach—repentance; one assurance to give—the certain and speedy manifestation of the Messiah; and one explanation to offer of his own appearance and work—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."

That John came to prepare society for what was to follow in the ministry of Jesus, is clear from his own statements, and from subsequent events; but how this preparation was effected is not as evident, and is worthy of some special effort to determine. Perhaps, if we can decide this point, we may not only understand the work of the harbinger better, but discern more distinctly the relations which we, as disciples, sustain to the world.

First of all, John must impress us as a preacher of righteousness. He seems to have come from the wilderness to rouse the people to a sense of their iniquities, to startle their dormant conscience, and, by so doing, to bring them into sympathy with the spirit of Him who is recognized by all generations as the "Holy One of Israel." He proclaimed the "Kingdom of Heaven," not that he was absolutely clear on all points, as his subsequent perplexities regarding the identity of Jesus imply, but that the multitudes might realize the indispensableness of repentance to the actual possession of Divine favor; for it was known to them that every great benefit conferred by the Almighty on their ancestors had been preceded by reformation, and it was, therefore, only reasonable that the

same condition should be required still. He consequently linked the blessing with the duty, that the one might enforce and explain the other. And evidently it carried great weight with it, for the people with alacrity confessed their sins, professed to put them away, and attested their sincerity by baptism in the Jordan. To this course they were also impelled as much by the searching and unsparing character of John's preaching as by the grandeur of the prospect which he opened to their faith. He declares that the ax is laid at the root of the tree, and that every tree that bringeth not forth fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. Warnings breathe from his lips, and threats of coming wrath mingle with invitations of mercy. He rudely but faithfully sweeps away their expectations founded on lineage, and reminds those who would build on their father's virtue that God out of stones could raise up children unto Abraham. The duty he enjoins is pressed home on each individual. He has special directions for the tax-collector, for the soldier, and for the affluent and ruling classes. To each person and each order he has a special message, showing in what particular the conduct of each must be reformed. Manifestly the stern Baptist takes no roseate view of iniquity, engages in no nice distinctions regarding degrees of responsibility; but, looking on sin as a monstrous curse, brings to bear on its removal the entire force of his convictions. The moral greatness of the man himself imparts additional intensity to his appeals. His personal sanctity is a living rebuke to the impurity of his age; his abstemiousness brings into sharp relief the indulgence and effeminacy of his times; his independence condemns the sycophancy of his countrymen, and his courage their nervelessness and timidity. By contrast with him his contemporaries see what they are—their corruption, licentiousness, weakness, and servility are revealed to them—and, being

filled with contempt of themselves, they take up the question: "What shall we do, then?" and are ready to give heed to the answer that falls from lips such as his. Thus, then, through these means, the harbinger rouses the slumbering conscience and forces the nation to view its own moral degradation, awakes in it desires for deliverance, and, in so doing, prepares it for the ministry of Him who comes to seek and to save the lost.

While the preacher of righteousness in this manner deals with the people, he is not oblivious to the necessity of disclosing and identifying the person of the Messiah. Witness must be borne to Him; He must be introduced by one in whom the public have confidence, else a tremendous obstacle would remain in the way of His success. Having revealed the depth and the guilt of sin, surely it was due to the conscience-stricken that the Redeemer should be pointed out. If, therefore, for no other reason, the moral tempest he had evoked demanded that he should make known the Being at whose word a holy calm would return. There was, however, an additional reason for this act. The way before the Messiah was to be prepared, and this could only be done by fixing the attention of all classes on the Personage who claimed this title, and by bearing witness to the rightfulness of the claim. This would arouse interest in His movements, would open the heart to His instruction, and would, at least, constrain friends and foes rigidly to scrutinize the evidence, furnished by His doctrines and doings, of His Messianic character.

In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, John recognizes the promised One—Him who had been called "The Desire of All Nations"—and before the multitudes at the Jordan he acknowledges His exalted rank. How the prophet knew the real dignity of the peasant, how he discerned His glory beneath the garments of humility, we know

not. Though related to Jesus by ties of kindred, and though from his mother he may have heard the story of Bethlehem, he had not seen Him since childhood, if at all. Their homes were distant from each other, and their paths had lain in different directions. Consequently Jesus was a stranger to John. From what he had heard of Mary's Son the thoughts of the harbinger may have turned toward Him, and he may have expected Him to come out of Galilee; but he had no means, at least none that we can ascertain, of knowing that the humble man who came demanding baptism at his hands was the very Jesus around whose birth so many marvels had clustered. But he knew Him, nevertheless. Perhaps in the wilderness God had revealed to the soul of John the express image of His Son, just as He caused His goodness in the former times to pass before the eyes of Moses when the lawgiver in the desert prayed for a sight of His glory. There, in the solitudes of Judea, the form of Jesus may have risen before the hermit, and may have lingered in his memory up to the hour when the original appeared before him. It is written that "the pure in heart shall see God." They always see Him. And if no vision rewarded the desire of John to see in advance the "Blessed One," may it not be that the purity of his heart opened his eyes to the Divine beauty that streamed from the person of the Nazarene? Be this as it may, he knew Him, and bore no equivocal testimony to His claims. Yea, the very character of his testimony was such that it could not but be regarded as trustworthy, and as eminently fitted to leave a deep impression on honest minds, however in the first instance it may have failed to carry conviction. Not only did he disavow all personal ambition for the honors due the Messiah; not only did he point out the inferiority of his work, as compared with that which should be done by his successor and superior; but he also recognized as inev-

itable the decline of his influence and the growing power of Him whom he had introduced as the "Lamb of God." "He must increase, but I must decrease" was the answer that he gave to his disciples, who were jealous for his reputation. Ancient Kingdoms rose on the downfall of preceding ones—a fact abundantly illustrated in the history of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome; and to-day one man's fortune seems to be built on the ruin of others, and life itself is sustained at the cost of life to thousands. Property continually changes hands. The affluent families of one generation are the poor of the next, and the poor of the present will be the affluent of the future. Wellington becomes famous at the expense of Napoleon, and Grant at the expense of Lee; and thus, through all departments of society, we find in operation the law of decrease and increase which John recognized. But for him to confess it as cheerfully and candidly as he did, is a matter of considerable significance. We are not ready, as a rule, to acquiesce in this provision of Providence, especially when it tells against our prominence and success. We are rather inclined to fret about it, and rebel against it. Not so the harbinger. And his acknowledgment of its justice in his case not only convinces us of his disinterestedness and sincerity, but must have led those who heard him and venerated him, to ponder more thoughtfully than they otherwise would the assumptions of the Being in whose favor it was made.

It remains to be said that the death of John must have added weight to his testimony, and must have rendered the righteousness which he preached even more glorious in the eyes of the nation, and thus have facilitated the progress of Jesus. Arrested by Herod, who was living unlawfully with his brother's wife, and who feared the political results of Jesus' movement, he was confined in the gloomy prison of Machærus. But even there he made

himself felt. Summoned to speak before the Court, possibly to entertain his lordly jailer and adulterous companion, he took for his text the words, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." What a discourse must have followed, as he denounced the treachery, cruelty, and lust of his dignified hearers. How their cheeks must have changed color and their hearts have trembled beneath the scathing rebukes of the rough man who spoke in a palace as he had in the wilderness, and who had not acquired the habit of whispering smooth and pleasant things in the ears of the great. Such fearlessness could not be tolerated by the guilty. Though it had not been without effect on Herod, it only served to rouse the fury of the devilish woman at his side. You are familiar with what followed. In an evil hour, betrayed by his lusts, the wretched ruler consented to the murder of the Baptist. The command was given, and in the darkness of his dungeon the faithful witness met the martyr's death. His head was brought to Herod; but as he looked upon its silent, cold, scornful lips they must have seemed to murmur, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." Never could he escape the echo of these words; and when he heard afterward of the mighty works of Jesus his startled conscience led him to fear that the murdered one had risen from the dead, and doubtless in his dreary exile, to which he was doomed when imperial favor was denied him, the mangled corpse of his victim must often have appeared blue and stark to his eyes; and in his dying moments the ghastly head of God's butchered servant must have frowned through the gathering darkness, and its shriveled lips have shrieked once more in his ear, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." A death that could so powerfully affect him who was its immediate author, and the fact that it was the result of John's unbending and unflinching righteousness, would naturally

draw the attention of the community to the claims of that cause which had received his advocacy.

My brethren, like John, you are the Lord's forerunners. It is your duty to direct the mind of your neighbors to Jesus, to call on them to repent; and, by the clearness of your testimony, and the consistency of your life, to add force and authority to your words. Whatever vices or habits may obstruct the way of Jesus in His endeavor to save, you must protest against and seek to eradicate. This is your work; you must aim to promote every reform; not, however, merely for the reform's sake, but that obstacles between the soul and its Savior may be removed. This is the message that John's career bears to you; and you, who are not disciples, it comes to you preaching, as he did of old, "Repent: the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." At hand! Yes, near you—so near that even now you can grasp its blessings. But to do so you must repent; you must turn from sin; you must prepare the way in your heart, that Jesus may enter and manifest Himself both as your Friend and Redeemer. And if, at this hour, you shall put away evil from your thoughts and iniquity from your acts, in the wilderness of the soul shall His presence be immediately realized, and there shall that kingdom be reared which is neither "meat nor drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

V.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

Jesus said, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.—*Matt. iii, 15.*

THE River Jordan, whose name “Descender” suggests its character, flows from the southern slopes of Lebanon, through two lakes, over twenty-seven rapids, and along a course so winding and tortuous that it traverses two hundred miles after it leaves Gennesareth in accomplishing sixty of distance, and from its source sweeps downward until its waters merge with those of the Dead Sea at a depression of over 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. It may be likened to a child born of noble and unsullied ancestors who, forgetful of his origin, adopts a perverse and crooked way, and after falling into lower and yet lower depths of vice is finally hurled by the momentum of his wickedness into the invisible asphaltic floods where the stench of moral death rises forever and ever. Although the Jordan is an insignificant stream, and not worthy to be compared with the Nile, the Tiber, the Amazon, or Mississippi, nevertheless it is endeared to the Christian world by many venerable associations. Along its banks Lot and Abraham wandered in the olden times; near to one of its fords Jacob wrestled with the angel of God; through its miraculously-parted waters Joshua led the triumphant hosts of Israel; in its bosom Naaman, the leper, found cleansing; across its narrow channel David passed once as a soldier, and again as a fugitive; and on its glassy surface Elijah cast his wonder-working mantle. The horses of Sesostris slaked their thirst in its cooling

floods; the armies of Sennacherib encamped on its plains, which were to the eyes of Lot as the garden of the Lord; the blood of the Ephraimites reddened its waves; and the spears of the Amalekite, the Saracen, and the Crusader glittered and flashed in the surges of its tide. But, after all, it is neither the glories of these embattled hosts nor the marvels of ancient Jewish history that invest the sacred river with its chief interest to the serious soul. It is rather its intimate connection with the beginning of the Gospel and with the manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah that imparts to the Jordan its peculiar charm. On its shores Heaven's Kingdom first was preached; in its waters the earliest disciples confessed their sins; and in its liquid grave the Son of Mary was buried, that from thence arising He might be saluted by the descending Spirit as the Son of God. These are the associations that exalt the Jordan above all other rivers, and that sanctify it to the imagination and the heart of the religious world.

John's preaching is expressly called "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," and it is explicitly declared that "the Law and the Prophets were until John," and that since that time "the Kingdom of God is preached." It is also written: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John." (*See Mark i, 1; Luke xvi, 16; Matt. xi, 12, 13.*) It would appear, then, from these passages that the Harbinger came to inaugurate the Messiah's reign on earth, and that as this reign is internal, in the heart of the believer, and external, in the community of the faithful, he contributed to the first by the ethical change which he commanded, and to the second by the ceremonial ordinance which he administered. John came "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," and he did so by giving them "the knowledge of salvation in

the remission of their sins," and by teaching, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (*Luke i, 17, 77; John iii, 36.*) Thus he opened the hearts of his hearers to the new era, turned them from sin to righteousness, and inclined them to receive Jesus as the guide and principle of their inner life. But to give to the company of those who thus accepted the Messiah fellowship with each other, to discriminate them from the impenitent around them, and to impart to their subjection and allegiance outward form and visibility, he instituted, on the authority of Heaven, the rite of baptism. In this manner the essential features of the Divine Kingdom were revealed to men, and were expressively symbolized; and however these may have been supplemented by others during the personal ministries of Christ and His apostles, and however they may have been perfected subsequently by additional and profounder knowledge of grace, and by completer and minuter organization, they were designed to remain, and in fact do remain, the distinctive signs of the nature and the presence of that Kingdom on earth.

I shall not undertake to discuss the character of the ordinance which John administered, for it is my opinion if less ink had been employed in the controversy and more charity the Christian community would not have been so sadly divided on the subject as it has been. It may be enough to say that the meaning of the word which describes the act, the localities where it was originally performed, the circumstances attending it, the symbolization involved in it, and the views of the most scholarly men in Christendom, all point to the conclusion that John immersed his disciples, and that immersion is the true form of Scriptural baptism. With this hasty generalization, I may be permitted to address myself to the main question

brought to our attention by the text, and which it is my desire to examine. Why was our Savior baptized? Why was He who acknowledged no sin and who committed none subject to the same rite which was restricted by John to penitents? Why should He, the spotless Lamb of God, who had no iniquity to confess, tread the same road with publicans and sinners? The harbinger himself was perplexed by His condescension, and would have had it otherwise. "John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (*Matthew iii, 14.*) Evidently, the servant was not reconciled to the humiliation of the Master. He discerned in Him a purity that was not of earth; and though he had never met Him before, at least in later years, so that it was true, as the Evangelist records, that He was a stranger to him, and though he would not avow his convictions regarding Him until he had received the promised sign of identification from Heaven (*John i, 33*), nevertheless, he recognized in Him a moral splendor, which His mean surroundings could not obscure, and which compelled the belief that He was none other than the Promised One. But why should He be baptized? Jesus answers: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Righteousness—what righteousness? Olshausen tells us in his Commentary that this word is equivalent to *dikaion*, and signifies "what the law demands." But what law is it that requires baptism? Not the Moral Law, for that has nothing to do with ceremonies; not the Levitical, either in its application to private individuals or official personages, for that never enjoined such a rite as John administered; and if neither of these can be intended, it necessarily follows that the law referred to is that of the new dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven which the forerunner preached and inaugurated. Our Savior submitted to all of the divine requirements, whatever might be their character. Being

a man, He obeyed the moral law; being an Israelite, He observed the ceremonial law of His nation; and, being the Chief and King of a New Empire, it is reasonable to suppose that He would not fail to honor its precepts and sanction its institutions. To suppose otherwise is to imply that He attached less importance to the positive enactments of His own kingdom than He did to those of the old theocracy; and it is to assume that He could have undertaken the administration of its affairs without identifying Himself, as others had done, with its interests. Neither of these conjectures is admissible; and it therefore follows that Jesus was bound by His relations to the Gospel economy to uphold the authority of its ordinances, and to render them the homage of His personal obedience.

Looked at in this light, Christ's baptism must be regarded, first of all, as a solemn ratification of what had been done by the Harbinger. The kingdom John proclaimed, whatever else it was or was not, was certainly a kingdom of righteousness. He admitted no one to its privileges or to the ranks of its citizens who had not repented of sin and furnished evidence of moral amendment. Expression to this ethical spirit was given in baptism. By the burial of the penitent in water and his rising again the declaration was made that he was dead to his old life of transgression, and was alive forevermore to righteousness. The idea of cleansing had for a long time been associated with water, and it is the judgment of some writers that this is the sole and exclusive idea set forth by John's baptism. But if this were so, then the ordinance he administered was only a continuation of ceremonial washings in use among his countrymen, and was not in any real sense a new institution. In my opinion this misapprehension is the result of fixing the attention too exclusively on the element employed, and not at all on the action. Water taken by itself may denote purity; but when it is not self-applied by the can-

didate, and when the manner in which it is used suggests some other thought, or modification of thought, we are bound to believe that some variation from it is intended. Hence, when we find John immersing, and when we subsequently find the apostles alluding to baptism as a burial, we cannot but conclude that while the element employed expresses the idea of purity, the action itself denotes a death and a resurrection—death to sin, resurrection to righteousness. Now, it is well to remember that on this supposition the character of the kingdom to which the ordinance stands related as a sign must correspond to its meaning. When Jesus was baptized He confessed no sin, for He was not conscious of sin and had none to confess; but by this conspicuous omission when submitting to the rite, He not only proclaimed His own absolute deadness to every motion of iniquity, He also confirmed John's conception of the Kingdom of Heaven among men. By this act He practically declared, as the forerunner had taught, and as He Himself subsequently explicitly taught, that the principles, doctrines, measures, and observances of the new economy are in harmony with the spirit of holiness, and that only those who cherish this spirit are entitled to be received into its membership. Throughout the Gospels and Epistles these ideas become more and more distinct, and are blended with every representation made of the Christian community. It is said that the ropes both large and small used by the royal marine of England are so made that a red thread runs through them from end to end, and that it is so twisted in them that it cannot be extracted without undoing the whole. This is a measure of precaution against dishonesty, and enables the Government to identify its property anywhere. In this manner righteousness is interwoven with every description of the kingdom, and with every allusion to its character. In treating of its most important or most insignificant aspects; and in

dealing with its marvelous or commonplace phases, the inspired writers interblend unfailingly this supreme characteristic; and it is so intertwined with its very existence that it cannot be separated without destroying the kingdom itself. Let us then learn from Christ's baptism that righteousness is essential to religion, that the one has no place apart from the other, and that every church assuming to be an exponent of the latter should never receive into its fellowship any but those who are devoted to the former.

The baptism of Jesus must also be viewed as an impressive manifestation of His exalted dignity. Profession is an idea that enters into the very nature of the rite. The people who originally submitted to it avowed their faith in Him who was to come (*Acts xix, 4*), as they who do so now express their faith in Him as having already come. They alike acknowledge Him as their Savior, and themselves to be His disciples. They thus manifest what they are, and the allegiance which they bear. It was then fitting that Jesus should employ the same means when putting forth His claims, and in assuming His sublime position as Messiah. The conviction of His vocation which, as I have already argued in a previous discourse, had been growing, now had reached its climax, and it was imperative that it should be outwardly declared. He does not come among the expecting converts, asserting in so many words His official rank, but treads the path which they had trodden. His act they would interpret as a profession of something, and as He made no confession of sin they must have felt that it was of something in which they had no share. Doubtless they did not understand Him; but He evidently understood Himself. As a ruler of a nation must first be recognized as a citizen, and as he must in some form subscribe to its constitution and laws, so Jesus knew that before He could exercise sovereignty

in the Gospel Kingdom He must be enrolled among its members and subscribe to its doctrines and institutions. This He did in baptism, thereby meaning to manifest His kingship, as the people in the same ordinance had manifested their citizenship. And that which He thus did as a duty to Himself, to His Father, and to the world, became the medium of His identification and recognition by those who were looking for the "Consolation of Israel."

Remember that it was predicted by Isaiah that the Messiah should be anointed by the Spirit of God, and you will understand why John expected to behold the sign of the "Spirit descending and remaining on Him" (*John i, 33*). We cannot suppose that up to the hour of His baptism Jesus had been a stranger to the Divine influences; but only that they had not in all of their fullness been conferred. When, however, He was buried beneath the waves of Jordan the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice was heard exclaiming, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (*Luke iii, 22; Matt. iii, 17*). Then was the prophecy of Isaiah accomplished. But who heard the voice, who saw the dove? Jesus heard. John saw. God had spoken in other ages, and to other men, but never such words as these. In the olden times He had charioted Himself "in the thunder of the echoing rocks around," and had drawn near to the trembling multitudes in the wilderness. But the very sound of His voice was unendurable; there was not a note in all the gamut of human feeling that it did not touch, and not a discord in human fear that it did not evoke, so that the people cried out, "Let not God speak to us lest we die." His words then were like the flames that accompanied them, like the crashing noise of quaking mountains, and like the blinding, swirling, appalling smoke which hovered threateningly around them. They were as fire for purity, and as fire

they scorched all self-righteousness and vanity; and they were as midnight to the soul, for the law of duty which they declared was so perfect that no earthly creature could ever hope to comply with its requirements and escape its penalty. Ah! how marked the contrast between His speech to Moses at Sinai and His approval of Jesus communicated to Jesus at the River Jordan! As gentle as the dove, as low and soft as the soothing zephyr, as musical as the stars, as silent and yet as clear as inarticulate thought sounded His testimony in the human soul of Jesus: "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." If doubts yet lingered concerning His character and calling; if fears yet strove with dawning hopes, like storm-clouds with the sun-rise, and if His consciousness of personal alliance with the Infinite was yet thwarted and eclipsed by counter-motions in Himself, how this Divine voice must have calmed, assured, strengthened, enlightened, and confirmed. As it sounded in His soul sweeter than choirs of angels, and noiseless as the midnight silence, all apprehensions and uncertainties must have disappeared. He must have felt Himself transcending the limitations of time and space, and have realized in Himself the sense of ubiquity and eternity. He must have been exalted as on the wings of the dove from the commonplace about Him to the mysterious, from the earthly to the heavenly, from the human to the Divine; yea, He must have realized the enlinking of the Divine and human in Himself, and His eternal heirship to that Throne whose dominion is as boundless as the universe, and whose universe is measureless infinitude.

Jesus heard, but John saw. Saw—what? The Spirit in dove-like form descending, the evangelist seems to teach. But how came he to see what those about him saw not? I cannot tell. Perhaps he was the only being prepared for such a vision. Or it may be that we do not understand the narrative, and that we take too literally

what may be after all but a comparison. Be that as it may, the harbinger received the promised token, and doing so all hesitancy ended; and when the hour for the sign arrived, he pointed to Jesus and exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Thus was the Messiah manifested to Israel; and thus, my people, does it come to pass that, receiving the attestation of the Holy Spirit in baptism, your character is elevated and your conduct beautified, and the divine life in you is disclosed to the world so that at least your way is open, as Christ's was opened, to a ministry of suffering goodness.

And this brings me to a final reflection. The baptism of Jesus will not be fully understood unless, in addition to what has already been advanced, it is regarded as a formal consecration to His work. This it evidently was. By this act He commits Himself to the new movement, abandons His past retirement, and publicly assumes the responsibilities of His mission. His baptism is a line of separation between His life in Nazareth and His life as the Savior of mankind. Henceforward He has only one object before Him—the redemption of the race—and to that He devotes himself unreservedly. In the Jordan He buries the carpenter and the peasant, and from the Jordan He rises the Messiah and the Mediator. He is no longer the merely contemplative, serious, and apparently aimless villager, but the vigorous, active, earnest leader, concentrating His mighty soul on the accomplishment of a work which enlisted the sympathy of angels, and which has won for Him the homage of human gratitude and praise. As baptism compromised the Jews who received it, pledged them to the support of the Heavenly Kingdom, and dedicated them soul and body to its welfare, so would it be understood to set Jesus absolutely apart to its high demands. This He unquestionably realized, and hence the deep significance which attaches to His submission to the ordinance. To

behold Him calmly and deliberately abandoning home and friends, turning His placid face in the direction of the cross, and in the water meekly expressing His entire self-surrender even to its mysterious and inexpressible anguish, is to contemplate the finest and grandest picture imaginable. Yea, rather the noblest and sublimest reality of history conceivable.

Ah! sacred Jordan that didst welcome Him to thy bosom, that didst swallow Him up as the grave did at last in victory, no wonder that thou too didst turn prophet, and in restoring Him from thy liquid tomb didst foreshadow His triumph over death and His resurrection from the dead! Thou dumb witness of His consecration, even thou couldst not refuse thy mute testimony to His ultimate and eternal exaltation! And as thou hast been, so shall baptism be through all ages, the pure, radiant, and perpetual sign of His glorious conquest over His grim conqueror. Wherever administered, whether in stately church or in lowly limpid stream, thy voice, louder than "the voice of many waters," shall proclaim that He who lived and was dead, is now alive, and liveth for evermore.

What baptism was to John's disciples and to Jesus, it is now to believers. It is the sign of our separation from the world, and of our self-devotion to the Heavenly Kingdom. It means that we, too, at last have found an object worthy of our thoughts, our endeavors, and our sacrifices, and that we give ourselves unqualifiedly to its attainment. The ceremony by which we record our vow likewise expresses our new aim in life. In it we behold figured to the eye a burial and a resurrection; and it is to the work of quickening the morally dead that we dedicate ourselves. We go forth from our formal consecration to overcome spiritual death in others, to strengthen belief in immortality, and to assure the afflicted that they who sleep in the dust of the earth shall rise again. Every

one who has received the sacred rite of baptism has publicly surrendered himself—everything that enters into self, whether personal endowments or possessions—to this glorious cause; and every one who would be true to his profession will not withhold anything he calls his own that may contribute to its blissful triumph.

Were I to take a magic-lantern it would be necessary, if I would cast an image on a surface, to see that a light was in the lantern, and that the receiving surface was white and stainless. The picture to be reproduced might be in its place, but, apart from these conditions, its transmission would be impossible. We have tried this evening to present the Gospel portraiture of our Lord's baptism in this discourse as in a magic-lantern, and we have hoped that the Divine Spirit would so illuminate it that its significance would be conveyed to your soul, and the act, indeed, be honored in your life. But such results depend on the purity of your spirit and the sincerity of your desires. No white surface, no image, is the law of the lantern, and it is equally the law of the heart. If you have experienced the grace of God in conversion, if you have been washed in the Savior's blood, then our Lord's baptism has come to you as a pattern of your own. You have received it as an example of what you should do to be, as He was, on the side of righteousness, and to show forth, as He did, your consecration to the service of God and man. Is it too much to expect that, seeing these things, you will hasten to do them; that you will no longer hesitate to follow where He has led, and where unquestionably the path of duty lies? Those of you, my hearers, who have never turned from sin I do not expect to appreciate these words; but if you have any desire to pursue a religious life let me exhort you to seek the great heart-preparation, and then will you be able with gladness to take up your cross in holy baptism.

VI.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.—*Matt. iv, 1.*

IT is related by Rufinus that a hermit, favorably known and famous for his asceticism, was tempted and subdued in the wilderness, to whose friendly solitudes he had fled for repose from the allurements of society. On his distempered mind there arose the vision of a form, fair and beautiful, perhaps like one beloved in youthful days, whose smile rekindled the smothered fires of human passion, and whose touch, illusive though it was, roused the old affections long thought dead. Overcome by the awakened sense of personal frailty, and convinced that rocks and caves afford no shelter from stormful evil, and no barrier against the influx of earthly seductions, he turned his back upon the desert, and rushed into the surging crowds of the great world again. Similar is the lesson taught by George Ebers in his striking fact-fiction, entitled *Homo Sum*. Two aged anchorites are represented as dwelling apart in Nature's solitudes, as struggling fiercely with inbred iniquity, and as coming to believe, at last, that fastings and cruel scourgings had driven from their soul the foul and stubborn foe. But in this impression they were miserably at fault. Even in their wretched isolation, self-exiled from the charms of time and sense, and with their thoughts centered in heavenly things, temptation assailed them, and they were made to realize that man is never safe from its debasing influences. Pious Paulus is betrayed into courses foreign to his ascetic vow, and dies in his cave

upon his knees, wrestling with the flesh, having traced upon the wall in charcoal a request for remembrance in the intercessory supplications of the devout; and saintly Stephanus ends his life with his fingers clutching the throat of an enemy, who years before had done him wrong, whom he had tried to forgive, but whose unexpected appearance had in a moment quenched his generous impulses, and kindled in him such a spirit of revenge that he thrusts him back from the rocks which he is climbing into the abyss below, and, as he is being dragged down with his adversary to a terrible death, he cries out to those who entreat him to forgive, "He shall be damned; he shall be damned!"

Into the wilderness went Jesus immediately after His baptism, not to escape, but to meet temptation. This, however, was no purpose of His own, but of the Spirit that influenced Him. Doubtless the incoming of Heaven's power and those approving words uttered by Heaven's voice agitated and overwhelmed His human soul so that He craved to be alone—alone that He might give expression to His deep and strange emotions, and alone that He might regain the composure which His work so imperatively demanded. Whither He was led we know not. The sacred writers simply say the "wilderness;" but from the added statement of Mark that wild beasts were with Him, we infer that it was some lonely spot apart from the habitations of man, and even more desolate than that desolate region where John first proclaimed the kingdom of heaven. Tradition has located the scene in the neighborhood of Jericho, on a storm-lacerated mountain known to travelers by the name of "Quarantania," and which, from its grandeur, might well serve as an altar of prayer, and, from its savageness, prove a fit resort for devils. This may or may not have been the battleground chosen for the conflict between the representatives of light and darkness,

nor is it necessary that we commit ourselves on a matter so indistinct; but it is certain, wherever it was, that there no living beauty refreshed the eye, and no dreamy loveliness invited to repose. It is enough for us to know that in some such place as this Satan sought to beguile, ensnare, and destroy the Son of God. Well may we believe, however, that this was not his sole attempt to dethrone the moral majesty of Jesus. Luke suggests a subsequent attack, when chronicling the issue of the struggle, for he says that the devil left Jesus for a season; and Jesus Himself seems to anticipate a recurrence of his assaults, when just before entering Gethsemane, He utters the words, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." It would seem, then, that no spot, however retired or sacred, was respected by the genius of evil, and that no circumstances, however solemn and pathetic, assured immunity from peril. Such being the case, surely none of us ought to imagine himself secure, and none ought for a single moment to be unprayerful and unwatchful. If the wilderness was invaded, if the influences of baptism, and of forty days' uninterrupted communion with the Invisible, were not sufficient to restrain and overawe the enemy, it is not likely that the mad whirl of city life, and the brief, broken seasons of devotion, which alone seem possible, can afford us adequate protection. The fact is, we are at all times in danger. In the rural home of childhood, in the pleasant haunts of youth, in the delightful associations of friendship, as well as in crowded thoroughfares, and in the gilded halls of amusement, the tempter prowls and skulks. He whispers his fatal suggestion to the young man in the counting-room, which if heeded will brand him forever with the name of thief; he insinuates his corrupting images among the pure ideals of maidenhood; he mingles his foul blasphemies with the reverent thoughts of devoutest souls; and in the street, at the fireside, in the country or

in the city, in the church or at the grave—yea, wherever humanity toils, rests, laughs, or mourns, he is spreading his net, and insidiously is plying his hellish craft. This much we may learn from the legends we have recited, and from the experience of Jesus; and this may convince us that we have more than a speculative interest in the subject of our present discourse, and incline us to derive from its discussion such lessons as may help us to defend ourselves against the powers of darkness.

You have not overlooked, I am sure, what is so forbidding in this narrative—that the Spirit of God leads Jesus into the wilderness for the purpose of exposing Him to the onset of Satan. Modify and soften the representation as we may, still it remains, arousing in us strange thoughts and painful suspicions. We remember it is written that “God tempteth no man,” and when we read what appears to contradict this statement we can hardly refrain from challenging its accuracy. But may we not be identifying things that differ? God tempts no one to sin; but He certainly tests all men in the interests of righteousness. The trial may terminate in failure, and, on account of this contingency, may properly be called a temptation; and even when it results in victory the peculiar peril involved will justify the employment of this term. It is the purpose of God that every soul shall fight its way to Heaven. From the beginning of the race to the present, moral strength has been developed through conflict with evil. The world is but an arena of strife. Each infant is a new-born gladiator, earth is an amphitheater reeking with blood, and spiritual manhood is achieved through encounters with men and devils more terrible and ferocious than savage beasts. Adam was tried in Paradise and succumbed; Christ was tried in the desert and overcame; and, in overcoming, His righteousness took on a more decisive character, and by revealing to Him the inexhaustibleness of His

resources, nerved and prepared Him for His ministry of suffering and sacrifice. Athletes are not sent to the race without previous training and testing of their powers of endurance. Vessels are not sent to sea without first examining their qualities and ascertaining their deficiencies; and, indeed, everything must, in the course of events, be proved; everything, from a bridge to an army, and from a cannon to a soldier, should be carefully tried before the final ordeal and peril arrives. We iron-plate a ship, and then we pound away at it to decide how many inches of metal and of what texture are needed to resist successfully the mightiest projectiles. Thus the Father exposes His Son to the assaults of Hell, that He may be thoroughly tried before He goes forth into the great world to take the offensive against its combined and intrenched iniquities. And thus does He prove every man who is capable of grand deeds and ennobling endeavors. The rule of God's providence is: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; if, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Society likewise is practically governed by the same law. In humbler stations men are being disciplined for higher ones; they are put on trial for something better; they are made to pass through fiery ordeals, that they may verify their worthiness and capabilities. If, however, like the lotus-eaters, they idly lull themselves to dreamy sleep, all experiments will be wasted on them, and they will either fall into crime and dishonor, or they will remain forever stationary in their subordinate positions. It is rather God's will that they should be like Ulysses, whom neither ocean's storms nor Neptune's hatred could dismay, and who, through all perils, pursued his voyage, and having guided his bark between Scylla and Charybdis, and having resisted alike the Siren's song and Calypso's wooing, deserved to regain

his vine-clad home and the loving welcome of his faithful wife.

The form of our Lord's temptation has occasioned considerable discussion. Interpreters to whom nothing is real that is not objectively literal, regard the account as strictly historical, and they do not hesitate to declare that any other view strikes at the reality of the fact itself. But other expositors differ from them. Schleiermacher sees in the record a description of an inward struggle; and Calvin taught the same before him; while Neander expresses the opinion that we have in it a historical verity, conveyed to us through the medium of symbol. Such is my own impression. An actual and painful conflict is here set before us in such terms as render it vivid to the least discerning mind; but to go farther, and assume that all was external and visible, is to create the suspicion that the power of temptation resides in the outward circumstances, and that only when something of the same kind takes place in our life will we be in moral peril. When the objective interpretation is insisted on, how reasonable to conclude that the merciful God will not permit the spirit of evil to approach in form less visible than it assumed when seeking to divert Christ from His saving mission. Such a delusion I dare not encourage; it is ruinous. The most injurious and potent physical agencies are unseen. The cold and cheerless wind, phantom of the buried winter, that sweeps over our gardens in the spring-time and arrests the growth of vegetation, is not visible to sight; and the sewer-gas, that creeps into our chambers and broods over our sleeping hours, and noiselessly wraps us around in the cerements of death, is veiled to our eyes and hidden from our touch. Maleficent moral influences are equally subtle, insidious, and concealed. When least suspected, some potent seduction may stream into the soul, undermining its fair resolves and luring to destruc-

tion. Like the fabled lodestone mountain, which, it is said, by a secret force drew from voyaging vessels every particle of iron, so the attractiveness of unnoticed evil may gradually eliminate the iron of virtue from character, and leave it, like the ill-fated ship, a wrecked and wretched thing. Let me pray you, then, not to expect an outward manifestation; rather be upon your guard against suggestions and solicitations that proceed from hidden sources — sources that elude the keenest scrutiny.

Permit me, also, at this point, to remind you that the malignancy of temptation does not depend on your belief in the personality of Satan. Some persons deny his existence; and it has seemed to me, from the joy expressed with the denial, that it is regarded as disproving the reality of sin's serpent-like fascinations. But this is a mistake. The thing to be dreaded is here, as we know from experience, whether embodied in a fallen archangel or not. If we follow the Bible strictly, we shall scarcely doubt the existence in our world of a supremely wicked agent, who is seeking to corrupt and to destroy. But on the supposition that we have taken its representations too literally, does that lessen in any perceptible degree the fact that there is in the earth a potent something that makes for unrighteousness? Define it as you please, the reality is unquestionable. Admitting that it is the spiritual atmosphere which has been formed by the iniquities of buried generations, or the shadows of all the transgressions committed deepening into darkness, or the moral contagion of vice, or the distillation of its essence, will any practical advantage be gained thereby? None that I can detect. Theology may gain something by the denial of Satan's personality, but human life is not benefited. There might just as well be a literal Devil as an actual Hell of evil among men. You may blot out belief in the existence of the first, but all your speculations cannot extinguish the fires of the

second. Judged likewise by reason, it seems probable that we should receive the Scripture testimony on this subject just as it reads. There are not a few human devils in the world; foul, malignant creatures, who delight in mischief. Many of them were once comparatively upright, but they kept not their first estate. They fell, and, like the ruined angels, now find pleasure in trying to drag others down to their miserable level. Providence does not wholly discard them, but uses them, in spite of themselves, to develop good in others. Their vile scavenger work only bespatters themselves with filth, and brings into clearer relief the virtues they would blacken. The stars are not dimmed by the envious clouds of night, they are simply obscured for a moment, and will break forth again in lustrous brightness; and the diamond is not injured by the gutter into which it may be hurled by hate, but will shine there as radiantly as in a regal crown. So the power of these human devils is not equal to their maliciousness, but is overruled, and is oftentimes made tributary to the growth and expansion of those graces which adorn the saintly soul. But if such mortal fiends traverse the earth, seeking whom they may devour, the existence of one superior to them all, of higher rank and different nature, who is prowling in search of prey, and who, at last, to the infinite relief of the universe, will swallow up his pernicious allies, ceases to be incredible.

The manner and method of Christ's temptation are fully as important to understand as the form. You will observe that Satan approaches Him as a friend. He finds Him hungering, and kindly points out how bread can be obtained; he finds Him asserting a great claim, and he indicates how it can be verified; and he finds Him on the threshold of a magnificent enterprise, and he shows how it can be made immediately successful. His words are, therefore, respectful, his advice plausible and apparently well

grounded in Holy Writ; and, as Shakespeare says of *Gloster*, he "seems a saint when most he plays the devil." And it is generally thus. When temptation seeks to seduce from duty it comes as an angel of light, with smiling face and honeyed words. Of this we have an admirable illustration in the writings of Goethe. *Faust*, the hero of Marlowe's celebrated tragedy, as well as of the German poet's drama, drinks deeply of the spirit of his master, *Mephistopheles*, and beguiles innocent *Margaret* to her destruction through an assumption of goodness which he is far from possessing. Startled by some things he has said, *Margaret* replies:

"How is it with religion in your mind?
You are, 'tis true, a good, kind-hearted man;
But I'm afraid not piously inclined."

He answers that he would not deprive any one of either church or creed. But this does not satisfy her, and she asks directly whether he believes in God or not. Whereupon he speaks eloquently, but vaguely, of impenetrable agencies which may be variously called "bliss," "heart," "love," "God"—

"Name is but a sound and smoke
Shrouding the glow of heaven."

Margaret, perplexed by his mystifying language, exclaims:

"What thus I hear
Sounds plausible, yet I'm not reconciled;
There's something wrong about it; much I fear
That thou art not a Christian."

To which her lover responds, in a reproachful, half-offended way:

"My sweet child!"

Better would it have been for her to have taken counsel of her doubts; then would she have saved her honor, her

reason, and life. But she did not; and the arts that ruined her have ruined thousands. What wreck is there drifting on the social sea that was not shattered on hidden rocks, when influenced to steer out of ordinary channels to seek success by some shorter passage? Is there a living corpse that was not deceived by the gaudy beauty of the flower, whose fragrant breath was poison to the soul? Is there one poor, fallen wretch who was not charmed to ruin by the enchanter "whose song is death and makes destruction please?" No; not one. The same story is related by every outcast, by every outlaw, by every befouled and erring creature. Temptation came in an unlooked-for hour, with the features of a saint, the tongue of a rhetorician, the hand of a sympathizer—but with the heart of a devil.

To comprehend the method of Satan we must bear in mind that a sinful disposition is not the only avenue of approach to the soul. Indeed, the more corrupt it is, the less necessity for him to interfere; for it will work out a sad destiny unaided. The master mischief-maker rather assails the innocent, and aims to overthrow the upright. No glory is won from blows inflicted on a fallen foe. It is the enemy, armed and active, on whom he opens fire or surprises in the night. This explains why he so persistently besieged our Lord. To subdue the righteousness of the Prince of Righteousness were to secure everlasting fame, and to subvert the innocence of the Innocent, to crown himself with lurid honors. But how could he obtain access to a sinless soul? How open the mysterious gates when not a traitor exists to sell the key? The answer is, by other approaches to the citadel of virtue than either inbred or developed iniquity; for such there are, and three of them are revealed in the narrative we are studying. They are:

The instinct of self-preservation.

The feeling of self-confidence.

The hope of self-aggrandizement.

Jesus had fasted long, and, being weakened in body and yearning for food, Satan counted on His yielding. There is no sin in hunger, though it often leads to sin, and hence the tempter said: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." No harm apparently could come from the miraculous supply of pressing want, and physical infirmity would plead for the employment of this means. And yet, sent as He was to use His resources exclusively for the good of others, and forbidden by a Divine law from delivering Himself by supernatural means, whether in the wilderness or on the cross, had He consented He would have incurred the guilt of the man who, for the sake of preserving life, sets at defiance God's ordinary commandments. Bread is an imperative necessity. This Jesus doubtless realized, though never for a moment wavering or gravitating toward the sin of Esau, who, for a morsel of food, sold his birthright. The instinct of self-preservation often leads to crime. Victor Hugo's *Jean Valjean* is the type of a numerous class, who, to perpetuate their own lives or to save that of others, trample on the law and do violence to right. Many a youth and maiden have fallen into evil courses, seeking to make bread out of the hard stones of vice and dishonesty, because they and theirs were starving. We cannot but pity while we condemn them; and we can but palliate, while we dare not justify. This, however, is a road to ruin that a majority of our race need not tread, and a road by which comparatively few reach their degraded doom.

Self-confidence is a more common and less excusable pathway to the abyss. It is written that the tempter took Jesus into the Holy City and placed Him on a pinnacle of the temple, by the literalists supposed to be the roof of the Stoa Basiliké, or Royal Porch, that looked sheer down

into the Vale of Kedron, and urged Him to cast Himself from the height, as God had promised to bear Him up by angel hands. Satan in this particular spoke the truth. Had Jesus complied He might have expected that His deliverance would have convinced the people of His Divine Sonship. But He knew that such presumption would not win His Father's approval. God had assured Him of help in every hour of need; but He would not be blameless if He first created the need and then asked the help. Deliberately to make the danger and then call for deliverance would have evinced the most unwarranted self-assurance, as though He could play with the Divinely settled order of government. At critical moments in His ministry Jesus was not lacking in self-confidence, and, on account of its strength in Him, Satan hoped to triumph; but as it was far from self-assertion, He was saved from sin. To have confidence in self is not wrong, and yet it may be veiled weakness. The youth who thinks that he intends no harm, and who, believing God's angels will help him through, appropriates money committed to his trust, will at last find that presumption is not piety. Should he in the same spirit venture where others have been destroyed—among drunkards, gamblers, and profligates—he will find no angels there to keep him from dashing his foot against a stone. If, in the course of duty, he is exposed to evil influences, he may pursue his way undismayed, for he has God's promise to fall back on; but if he courts ruin he has neither friend nor refuge. Shakespeare well says:

“Lie in the lap of sin, and not mean harm!

It is hypocrisy against the devil;

They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,

The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.”

Schiller's Diver, who rescues the king's golden cup from the “howling Charybdis,” in the spirit of self-confidence attempts the feat a second time, but “no wave ever

brings the lost youth to the shore." And thus thousands go down into the night of sin and shame, because they over-estimate their strength. Having through God's mercy once escaped the maelstrom, they dare it the second time, and then, abandoned to their own presumptuous folly, they sink to rise no more:

"They hear the loud surges sweep back in their swell,
Their coming the thunder-sound heralds along!
Fond eyes yet are tracking the spot where he fell:
They come, the wild waters, in tumult and throng,
Roaring up to the cliff — roaring back, as before,
But no wave ever brings the lost youth to the shore."

Self-aggrandizement, within proper limits, is legitimate. It is laudable to crave success. Jesus must have desired the establishment of His kingdom, and the recognition of His authority; and to this innocent longing Satan appealed when, having shown the empires of earth, he said: "These things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." A bold proposal, even though by the term "worship" he may only have meant the recognition of his sovereignty. That is, if Jesus would accept them as Satan's and leave the Satan in them undisturbed, He might have them. But such a bargain, if concluded, would have left the world as corrupt and miserable as ever. Christ desired real success, not a sham. He sought to renew the nations in righteousness, thus converting them to His empire, not to sway a nominal scepter over them. We are not always as discriminating. We yearn for honor, power, wealth; like the Lord, we are anxious for a kingdom, but we are not always concerned about its character. Hence, fortunes are amassed at the cost of integrity, political triumphs are achieved by the sacrifice of personal dignity, positions of honor are won through deceit, and cherished plans are accomplished by trickery. But, after all, what has been gained? Manhood has been subverted,

and the interests of community seriously imperiled, to gratify a senseless lust for power. The tortuous policy has resulted in loss—loss to the individual and to society at large. Here is our peril. The natural and legitimate desire for self-advancement may blind us to the law of right, and trampling on its sanctions may leave us the shadow in place of the substance. The kingdom we may win, but whether it be an empire of affluence, of fame, or of social influence, if it be Christless, it is not worth the having. Ah! better choose with the Holy One of Israel to possess a humbler domain, and have it the seat of righteousness and peace.

Thus the spirit of evil takes things that are right in themselves and perverts them to our undoing. Our hope of safety lies in decision and in reliance on "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Get thee behind me, Satan," was the prompt reply of Christ to His enemy. A similar rebuke will often dissolve the enchanter's spell. To parley with temptation, to tolerate its presence, to look half wistfully upon its face, is finally to yield. When the fox in the fable was invited to the den of the lion, he politely but firmly declined. He did so, because he noticed many footprints going toward the den, but none returning from it. Wise fox! He saw no necessity for debate; for, as the feet-impressions were all in one direction, it was morally certain that whoever entered "left hope behind." So every youth knows that the house of sin has gates that open only one way, and whoever passes them will find them closed to his return. Why should he halt irresolute? If he knows not how to acquire decision in resisting, if he is ignorant how best to meet the solicitations of evil, let him lay to heart the teachings of revelation, and, like Jesus, he will find them sufficient for his guidance and protection. "It is written," enough for counsel, enough for courage, enough for reason, is

“written” in this precious volume; and he who transcribes its sacred words on his soul, and transmutes them into conduct, may journey in safety amid the flames of temptation and the threats of Satan’s brood. Achilles was invulnerable at every point but one, and yet he never entered unarmed into battle. We are vulnerable at more points than one; then let none of us be so rash as to brave the strife of life unclothed with that panoply which is furnished in the armory of sacred truth. There is no river Styx that flows which can shield us from the sharp arrows of Paris, and no loving Thetis who can guard us from approaching danger. We are interested in no siege of Troy, but in the war that is waged by the powers of darkness against the soul. If they are to be defeated we must stand true. Not with earthly, but with heavenly arms must we fight. “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” is our defense, and if we rely on that, and wield it manfully, “no weapon formed against us shall prosper,” and in every struggle “we shall be brought off conquerors and more than conquerors.”

VII.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory. *John ii, 11.*

WE left Jesus in the wilderness, we find Him now at a wedding. How great the transition! He had passed from a fast to a feast, from a desert to a homestead, from loneliness to companionship, from melancholy to mirth, from frowning devils to smiling friends, and from the terrible ordeal of temptation to the gentle reposefulness of domestic joy. Only three days had elapsed since His struggle with Satan, and these days had been filled with momentous events. John had acknowledged Him as the "Lamb of God"; the other John, author of the Gospel that bears his name, with Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel, had confessed Him to be the Messiah, and with these five disciples He had journeyed from the fords of the Jordan to Galilee, that in the country of His youth He might begin His more public ministry. These significant occurrences were crowded together in the short term already indicated, and before its close He had entered the humble but cheerful circle at Cana. As we look upon Him there, we are reminded that human existence itself is, to a great extent, made up of just such extremes as those which our Lord experienced in less than half a week. Birth and death, marriages and funerals, prosperity and adversity, meetings and partings, happiness and misery, friendships and enmities, enter into life, compose its warp and woof, and frequently their diverse colors touch and cross each other within the measure of a single diurnal

movement of earth. Blest the man who, like Christ, is equally prepared for the evil and the good; and who, like Him, knows how to preserve his soul's integrity in the presence of the one, and how to yield his soul to the genial influences of the other!

Cana of Galilee was an inconsiderable village a few miles north of Nazareth, and the marriage which Jesus attended there must have been of humble character. The poverty of the people and the obscurity of the locality forbid the supposition that the contracting parties belonged to the higher classes, or that the festivities were such as affluence alone could furnish. If we picture to ourselves a modest cluster of houses advantageously situated on a hill, a company of simple Jewish peasants, with here and there a more important personage from the adjacent cities of Sepphoris and Nazareth mingling with the throng as guests, the veiled bride and the flower-crowned bridegroom, the sweet-smelling garlands and the soft-sounding music, such as home gardens and native talent could supply, and if we add to these features the harmless mirth and pleasant bustle of such occasions, we shall doubtless have before us a very correct idea of the scene. Such a spot, therefore, and the humble joys of such people would hardly have been mentioned by the historian but for an event in the life of our Lord which brought both into prominence. It was there and among these lowly villagers that Jesus, to save the host unmerited mortification and the guests unexpected disappointment, changed water into wine, and thus inaugurated the wonders which distinguished His subsequent ministry, and which have led to manifold questionings and to manifold blessings as well.

These wonders—not this one in particular, but all of them in general, and only this one as far as it may throw light on the rest—I desire in the present discourse to examine carefully and candidly.

In ordinary conversation the word "miracle" is employed to describe these acts, a word frequently met with in our version of the Scriptures, and which is supposed by many persons to give a clear and distinct idea of their nature. This, however, is a mistake. The term is from the Latin, and is synonymous with "wonder"; and the Greek words, of which it is claimed to be a translation, respectively signify "power" and "signs," and are frequently applied to what is purely natural. Such being the case, taken by themselves they do not define the order of works to which they belong, and were never intended to do so. They merely denote them, and leave us to derive a complete conception of their essential character from the detailed accounts given of their performance. The Gospels, therefore, are not responsible for the various definitions of miracles which have obtained currency among men. They have never said that they are violations of the laws which govern the universe, or deviations from such laws—though they may be either, or both, or neither—but have only taught that they are astonishing and expressive effects of which the Divine energy is the direct and all-sufficient cause.

It is generally assumed by those who antagonize with Christianity that miracles are irreconcilable with the uniformity of Nature's operations, that the universe is governed by law, that law reigns everywhere, that its course is never interrupted, and that it never could have been set aside. While in general terms this uniformity may be conceded without debate, yet it is questionable whether all that is said regarding its inviolability is susceptible of proof, or is even logically involved in the premise. To an atheist, who not only denies the existence of a personal God, but the freedom of man's will, and who reduces the universe to the level of a dead machine, it is evident that what he calls law can never be set aside

or held in abeyance, for to him there is no being anywhere to attempt such an undertaking. The atheistic conception of the universe necessarily excludes the possibility of miracles, and it renders them superfluous. But where this conception is rejected, and its opposite is firmly held, it cannot be shown that occasional deviations from the ordinary action of law are prejudicial or derogatory to its permanence. If there is a God, He must be above the law that He administers, and He would cease to be God were He so bound by it that under no circumstances He could subordinate it to His infinite will. On this point the Duke of Argyle has well written: "To believe in the existence of miracles, we must believe in the superhuman and in the supernatural. But both these are familiar facts in Nature. We must believe, also, in a supreme will and a supreme intelligence; but this, our own wills and our own intelligence, not only enable us to conceive of, but compel us to recognize, in the whole laws and economy of Nature. Her whole aspect answers intelligently to our intelligence,—mind responding to mind as in a glass. Once admit that there is a Being who,—irrespective of any theory as to the relation in which the laws of Nature stand to His will,—has at least an infinite knowledge of those laws, and an infinite power of putting them to use, then miracles lose every element of inconceivability. In respect to the greatest and highest of all,—that restoration of the breath of life, which is not more mysterious than its original gift,—there is no answer to the question which Paul asks, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible by you that God should raise the dead?'" As Schlegel has said, it must be "in the Divine power to suspend the laws of nature, to interfere directly with them, and, as it were, to intercalate among them some higher and immediate operation of His power, as an exception to their uniform development. For as in the

social frame of civil life, the author and giver of the laws may occasionally set them aside, or, in their administration, allow certain special cases of exception, even so it is with Nature's Lawgiver." Following this illustration, is it not clear that as the exceptions alluded to in civil government do not in reality derange its order or unsettle its course, so those which occur in a wider plane and under the Divine administration cannot fairly be charged with any such evil consequences? It may, likewise, be said to those who would make the Almighty a slave to His own enactments that as there are laws, such as those of electricity, which could not be discovered or brought into play by man until he had attained his present degree of enlightenment, so there may be laws which regulate the events called "miracles," which cannot be known or brought into requisition by any being whose intelligence and power are short of Divine. If this is admissible, then it follows that miracles are not even a deviation from the laws of nature, but only an application of laws which lie exclusively within the scope of the Almighty, and that their operation no more disturbs the harmony of the universe than the electric light is likely to derange the solar system. An English writer finds a crude exemplification of this thought in the famous Strasburg clock. He stood one day and "watched it steadily marking the seconds, minutes, hours, days of the week, and phases of the moon, when suddenly the figure of an angel turned up his hour-glass, another struck four times, and Death struck twelve times with metal marrow-bones to indicate noon; various figures passed in and out of doorways, the twelve Apostles marched one by one before the figure of their Master, and a brass cock three times flapped its wings, threw back its head and crowed. All this," says the scientist, "was as much a part of the designer's plan as the ordinary marking of time," and he had provided for it in advance, and

the machinery for its execution was so arranged as to come into play at the preordained and definite moment. So God may have prepared the universe from the beginning with a view to miracles, may have ordered its laws in such a manner that at the predetermined hour in His providence these wonderful phenomena should appear, and bear convincing testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus.

Before we trace the bearing of these reflections, there is another objection, different in character from the one I have considered, that deserves at least passing notice. I refer to the celebrated argument of Hume which undertakes to prove that it is impossible to believe in miracles at all. That he has failed in his endeavor is shown by no less a thinker than John Stuart Mill (*System of Logic, Book III, Ch. XXV*), who, after a thorough investigation of Hume's position, remarks that he has only made out that "no evidence can prove a miracle to any one who did not previously believe in the existence of a being or beings with supernatural power, or who believes himself to have full proof that the character of the being whom he recognizes is inconsistent with his having seen fit to interfere on the occasion in question." And various writers have elaborately shown that when Hume says that miracles cannot be credited because they are contrary to experience, he is taking for granted the very question in debate—namely: whether they are contrary to experience. They doubtless are contrary to your experience and mine, just as a frozen lake would be to an African Prince of the equator; but that does not prove that they were contrary to the experience of the ancients any more than the limited observation of the African proves that neither we nor our fathers have ever seen with our eyes or touched with our hands the realities of a polar winter. But by those who sympathize with Hume it is asked: Why do not

these wonderful works occur to-day? Lavatar answered that they do, and other writers agree with him, though I am persuaded that they are thinking of the supernatural more than of the specific phenomena to which the name of "miracles" is applied. So far as they are identical with the supernatural they never cease, but so far as they are a particular form of the supernatural they were transitory, and have passed away. Why? Leibnitz has given the reason substantially when he insists that they were wrought to supply the needs of grace. That is, in the development of God's gracious purposes periods arrived when they were necessary to enforce the word of His messengers, and to impart Divine authority to their mission. Hence we find them prevailing at three distinct epochs—during the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and its establishment in Palestine, during its reformation under the ministry of Elijah, and during the time of Christ and His Apostles, when Christianity was founded and disseminated. They are grouped around these momentous movements, these pivotal points in sacred history, because they were required to confirm and ratify, to reveal and convince. For them to be perpetuated indefinitely, to be distributed indiscriminately, and to be possible at all times, would destroy their specific value as credentials, and would seriously impede the progress of the race in knowledge and industry, as affording facilities for all human necessities, which in the nature of things would render superfluous both investigation and labor. Here, then, we have the reason why they are not in accord with ordinary experience; and, in view of the worthlessness of these several objections, we may conclude that the foundations on which their credibility rests have not been removed, nor even seriously shaken by the critics.

Miracles are direct acts of Divine power, brought about in harmony with the supremacy of law, and for the accom-

plishment of a special and religious end. But it will be answered that all such definitions plainly assume the reality of the supernatural, and that this is opposed by science, and therefore, can no longer be believed. I am aware of this impression, and know its vital connection with the subject we are considering, and consequently I may be permitted a few words in defense of what so many affect to scorn. Professor Ernest Naville, in the conference held at Geneva, 1861, said, referring to the prophecies of Bacon concerning the study of nature: "There is a very general disposition to consider physical and mathematical truths as the only truths which are solid and well proved, and to banish the wants of the heart and of the conscience, and the more elevated requirements of reason to the land of chimeras and vain imaginations. The progress of science—a legitimate subject of pride in our time—conceals, therefore, a dangerous rock. Minds fixed upon natural facts, as well as those shallow minds from whom the changeable surface of history hides its solid foundations, both arrive at one common result. The phenomena of time hide from them eternity. The two greatest edifices erected by modern genius (science and industry) project the shadow of doubt over our generation. It seems as if every stone added to the building veiled from us a new portion of the eternal azure." Hence it is that Strauss, Baur and Francis Newman contend that there is no such thing as the supernatural, that nature is immutable, and that interferences with, or departures from its settled order, are absolutely impossible. These conclusions are urged in the name of Bacon, or at least in the name of his philosophy, and many there are who think that he is responsible for them. This, however, is an error. Lord Bacon recognizes no incompatibility between his scientific principles and the essential doctrines of Christianity. In proof of this, refer to his *Valerius Terminus* and his *In-*

stauratio Magna; in the former of which he pleads for the authority of Scripture, which assuredly affirms the "supernatural," and gives utterance to the immortal saying, "a little natural philosophy inclineth the mind to atheism, but a further proceeding bringeth the mind back to religion;" and in the latter he prays—an act which in itself displays his belief in the supernatural—"that human philosophy may be no hurt to Divine truth, and that the opening of the paths of sense, and the brighter kindling of natural light, may never be the cause of aught of unbelief and darkness in regard to the Divine mysteries." Whoever then may be blind to the supernatural, Bacon was not, and Positivism and Agnosticism have no right even to insinuate anything to the contrary. And deep down in the human soul there is an ineradicable belief in its reality. No theorizing, no array of names, and no amount of ridicule have been able to efface the conviction that there is something more in this universe than matter and machinery. "True," writes Guizot to certain skeptics, "there are, in our days, among the people, many fathers, mothers, children, who believe themselves incredulous, and mock scornfully at miracles; but follow them in the intimacy of their homes, among the trials of their lives; how do these parents act when their child is ill, those farmers when their crops are threatened, those sailors when they float upon the waters a prey to the tempest? They elevate their eyes to heaven, they burst forth in prayer, they invoke that supernatural power said by you to be abolished in their very thought. By their spontaneous and irresistible acts they give to your words and to their own a striking disavowal."

It has been so, if we may believe Herbert Spencer, from the beginning of human thought, and doubtless it will be so to the end. Instructive would it be, had we time to pursue the subject deliberately, to trace the vari-

ous expressions of this faith among different nations, and during the course of all the centuries. So vast a task I cannot now undertake to perform, and yet it is important that it should not be entirely neglected. A few words, therefore, in this direction can not come amiss. We should remember that there is no historic religion in the world that does not acknowledge the supernatural. The Mosaic economy from first to last is permeated by it, and it hardly needs to be said that the New Testament constantly introduces it. The same is reported true of Islamism, of Buddhism, and of every other creed. In our day Protestantism subscribes to doctrines which plainly involve it, such as the Incarnation; and Romanism asserts its reality and its workings, uncompromisingly and dogmatically. But outside of religious systems there are evidences that it is cherished, and that it is as influential as ever. Even what may be a palpable superstition proves this. I express here no opinion as to the merits of Spiritualism, but its prevalence, and its hold on the public mind show conclusively that men are unprepared to admit that the earth is inaccessible to influences from other realms. It should also be remembered that where grave calamities have occurred, or where crimes have been committed, marvelous sights and sounds have been seen and heard, or the excited imagination has fancied that they have been seen and heard. Thus we are told that when Pompeii was about to be destroyed, strange forms were seen on Mount Vesuvius; and when Jerusalem was to be overthrown, mysterious omens heralded the event. It is recorded that terrifying signs followed the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's day. "About a week after the massacre," says a contemporary, "Charles had not been in bed two hours when he jumped up and called for the King of Navarre, to listen to a horrible tumult in the air; shrieks, groans, yells, mingled with blas-

phemous oaths and threats, just as they were heard on the night of the massacre. For seven nights at the same hour the sound returned" (*See White's Bartholomew*). It is not denied that all these appearances and noises may have been imaginary, but even on this supposition it is clear that humanity instinctively believes in the possibility of supernatural manifestations, especially on occasions of peculiar solemnity. Murderers cannot but feel that the ghosts of their victims can and ought to haunt them; wicked men entertain a dread of agencies which are not of earth, and in their moments of extremity godly persons look for help from sources that are beyond the domain of natural law. Thus extensive is the conviction that the unseen projects itself into the seen, and makes itself felt in human affairs; and to me it is incredible that it should be so wide-spread, persistent and tenacious were there no basis for it in fact. There must be some corresponding reality underlying these beliefs. It is inconceivable that they are foundationless, and yet so many people of every grade of intelligence hold to them thus earnestly.

But in addition to this, the supernatural is being constantly revealed before our eyes. Nature displays it. Not an object is there in all this complicated universe that fails to disclose the presence and action of Infinite intelligence. Science confesses its inability to cope with causes, and is forced to confine its inquiries to phenomena. And if we will only take pains to think, we cannot be blind to the evidences of design which point to a great Designer. The idea which some men venture to suggest that all things are self-begotten and self-ordered, is not only contrary to experience, but is contrary to philosophy as well. The harmonies, the adjustments, the adaptations proclaim a God, and a God not afar off; and if He is, and if He exercises perpetual control, then the supernatural is a permanent and undeniable fact. Can you believe that the

flowers shaped themselves, that they created their own perfume, and ordered their own times on the earth; can you believe that the bird fashioned its own wing and determined its own flight; or can you believe that man is the author of his own mind and varied powers? If you can, your imagination is stupendous, and you yourself are a living proof of the supernatural; for your credulity is more than human. But if you cannot, then you are confronted by the only adequate solution — *God* — a solution that carries with it all that I contend for to-day. Only open your eyes to the wonders and mysteries there are in a solitary star, or in the humblest grass-blade which you trample beneath your feet; gaze at the one, pluck and scrutinize the other, and though an infinitude may separate them, you will rise from your study deeply impressed with the truth, that, like the drifted branches seen by Columbus on the ocean, they are evidences of another world, and of a Being whose grandeur finds no parallel among the creatures of earth. But if you are not convinced, turn to the affairs of men, and you will hardly fail to observe interpositions and movements which justify belief in Providence. Providence and the supernatural are interchangeable terms. The one includes, yea *is*, the other. They are only different names for the same thing. Is there a life here which in its serious moods is not constrained to acknowledge that some deliverance or guidance or benefit it has received is directly traceable to Divine intervention? If there is, then is it very poor and destitute indeed; but most likely there is not. Perhaps there is not one of us who has not at some time enjoyed such an experience, and perhaps not one who fails occasionally to relate it for the encouragement of others. On a wider stage — that of history — we have repeated instances of Divine oversight and overruling. There is likewise in history a consistency and order, a development, as of a marvelous story, which calls

for a presiding mind to explain. Viewed in its light we are frequently very much like Sennacherib, meaning one thing in our heart, and yet used by the Almighty to further His own designs. We are hurrying to and fro, busy with our personal affairs, our petty schemes and pleasures, and unconsciously are being made to serve His higher and more comprehensive purposes. This must appear clear to all who will look backward, and will strengthen the conviction that God reigns.

While the credibility of the wonders which attended the ministry of Jesus may thus be defended, it is important that we consider more particularly their precise relation to His claims and works. John in the text says that they "manifested forth His glory." They are evidently here thought of as serving a purpose, supplementary to that which ordinarily they promote. They manifest, that is, show forth; they not only bear witness to our Lord's Messiahship; but, in addition, contribute to a better and clearer understanding of what He is and what He does. In my opinion, His miracles, while certifying, as in the case of Moses and Elijah, to His divine vocation, likewise reveal the grandeur of His person, and the graciousness of His ministry. Let us see how they fulfill these important offices.

His grandeur they display by bringing into relief, first, His self-forgetfulness, and, secondly, His self-sufficiency. Do you recall that passage in the last days of Jesus on earth, when, rebuking the foolish violence of Peter, He said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," and have you never asked yourself why He did not invoke this Heavenly succor? The answer is found in His self-abnegation. I said in my last discourse that Jesus never used His miraculous powers on His own behalf. He gladly multiplied the bread to feed the famishing

thousands, but never one poor stone would He change into a loaf to sustain His own exhausted body. He joyfully released the captive from the clutch of cruel disease, an enemy, mark you, stronger than any that rose in human form against Himself, and yet He disdained to rend the bonds that bound Him, though to His resistless might they were frailer than the green withes which Samson's strength defied. To heal the sorrow of a widow's soul He snatched her only son from the grave; but to assuage His own, He would not so much as bend the little finger of His omnipotence. To restore happiness to the humble home at Bethany He rebuked death, and yet quietly Himself went as a sheep to the slaughter; and though the awful power of the Infinite was in Him, as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth. Here is sublime self-abnegation, which even fable has not dared to match. It stands alone in the annals of heroes and gods, and is explained by the fact that Jesus gave Himself for others, and gave Himself so absolutely, and would have the world so realize the completeness of the gift, that He reserved nothing of all His vast resources to lighten His own burdens or lessen His anguish. And perhaps this wonderful self-surrender, which appears to have been optional with Him, added to the merit of His saving work, as it shows that He submitted to what He could have resisted, and accepted the suffering which He could have escaped, and willingly entered into man's condition of ill, from which, by a word, He could forever have freed Himself. But it displays something more than this. It brings out the grandeur of His lowliness. When I behold this Being, before whom devils trembled with fear, and from whose presence death fled in dismay, condescending to be thrust out of life amid the insulting words, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save," without giving a sign of that marvelous might which in a moment could have crushed His puny

adversaries, I am amazed, and feel that I see One who is too strong to be swerved from His purpose, too great to be swayed from His composure by taunts, and too good to be roused to hasty retaliation by the cruelty of the insolent and ignorant.

The miracles of Jesus, while they thus distinctly display His self-forgetfulness, likewise bring out sharply His self-sufficiency. When about to separate from His disciples, in reply to the perplexed demand of Philip, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," He impressively said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." In the following chapter He gives utterance to the terribly significant language, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Seen—but how? By His works, His marvelous works. Such is His own testimony. As the authors of great deeds are themselves revealed in their achievements, and as we get glimpses of what men are only through their performances, so we obtain an insight into the mysterious nature of Christ through His miracles. When He converts the sea into a highway for His feet, and walks on its yielding floods as though they were adamantine rocks; when He subdues the strength of the tempest, and creates a calm through His mighty word—"Peace be still"—as at the beginning the storm of chaos retreated before the sublime command, "Let there be light;" when He veils Himself in the invisible as hostile hands are raised against Him, and makes for Himself a refuge in the unseen as enemies assail His life—a refuge which He sought not when the hour of His great sacrifice had arrived, and which He momentarily chose only to prevent the miscarriage of the Father's purpose in redemption; when He provides the vintage without

a vineyard, and abundant bread without seed-sowing and harvest; and when He strikes terror to the heart of death, reverses its stern decrees, and with a smile of immortality thaws the rigid gates of its icy kingdom, we discern in Him a sufficiency which can only be likened to that which at the first called all things into being, and which maintains by the word of its power all things in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. Christ's miracles are microcosmic expressions of the inscrutable energy that made and sustains the world; they are samples of the measureless might that is back of the endless and varied phenomena of the universe, and they are, therefore, unanswerable witnesses to a personal grandeur which no other name than that of God can compass or define.

I have also said that they are related to His ministry—that they proclaim its graciousness. This will be manifest if we will but regard them as philanthropies and as parables. The miracles of Jesus are full of human sympathy and tenderness. They add beauty to the bridal robe at Cana, and glory to the burial shroud at Nain. They pour light into the blind eyes of mendicants, health into the poisoned blood of lepers, and strength into the withered bodies of helpless paralytics. Never once were they performed ostentatiously. Had they been wrought to amaze, startle, or astound, one might well have suspected Him of vanity. They were accomplished so lovingly, and withal so unobtrusively, that we are compelled to read in them a desire for the well-being of others and not for His own renown. This was the soul of His earthly ministry; this is its soul now that He fulfills it from the heavenly throne. We are to learn from it His undying interest in mankind, an interest that still asserts itself in providential deliverances and interpositions. Though He no longer performs miracles on behalf of man, He yet continues the exercise of that gracious power of which they were the pat-

tern and the pledge. You have been tossed on the "billow's ridgy steep" of ocean's fathomless abyss, and have heard the world of waters bellowing to the blast as it threatened entombment in its yawning floods, and yet your trembling bark outrode the storm; you have stood in the path of the descending avalanche as it came thundering and crashing in its might, and yet ere it could overwhelm you its course was stayed, its devastating mass divided, and you stood safe with the frozen billows of two snowy seas piled on either side; you have crouched before the unfettered wind, before whose Titanic force the trees of the forest bowed their stubborn heads, and the rocks fled precipitously from their base, while Nature everywhere seemed smitten with cringing fear, and yet you lifted up your head secure amid wrecks and desolation; you have dreaded the awful plague whose blighting and destroying breath poisoned the life of thousands and converted the green earth into a foul charnel house, and yet you have survived where many perished, a living being in a world of death; yea, you have wandered in some subterranean mine of poverty and affliction, groping in its labyrinthine chambers, hopeless, cheerless, and when urged by despair to the very brink of ruin, some shaft of light has suddenly quivered in the darkness and kindled the way to liberty. How came you to escape these perils? Who succored you when other helpers failed? The miracles supply the answer. As they announce the abiding interest of Jesus in the temporal well-being of God's creatures, they teach us that these special providences are due to the same spirit; and as they were wrought sovereignly and in harmony with infinite wisdom, so these providences, while they reveal a heart of love that beats with sympathy for all, are determined by an unerring counsel, and fall out in such a way as to save man from despair, and at the same time keep him from presumption.

Finally, miracles are enacted parables of the mysteries of grace. They are the Gospel of salvation in deeds and symbols. Jesus came not merely to minister to temporal good, but to win the soul from deadly evil. He is Redeemer as well as Benefactor. He opens eyes that have been blinded by sin, unstops the ear that has been deafened by iniquity, cleanses the heart that has been fouled by moral leprosy, quickens the conscience that has been stifled by wrong-doing, and casts devils out which too long have warmed themselves in the inner sanctities of man's nature. He changes the water of sorrow into the wine of joy; He converts the coarse loaf offered by the pulpit into the veritable bread of life, and multiplies it to meet the spiritual need of thousands; and to the disciples who cast their net according to His word He gives unnumbered converts in return for faith and toil. The miracles fraternize with these spiritual truths; they present them to the eye, and in the world of sense proclaim what only the penitent soul can find out to perfection. Said I not right, then, that they display the graciousness of our Savior's ministry? Surely, however viewed, they bring to light His matchless tenderness, His abundant love, and His holy purpose born of both to help and save mankind; and if they do this, then beyond question all that I have claimed is more than verified.

Permit me to add in closing that it seems legitimate to infer from the relation which these marvels bear to Jesus and His work that the religion which He founded must be essentially supernatural. It is not likely that He would have been surrounded by these wonders had He not designed to leave the impression that while they would cease Christianity would derive its life from unseen sources, and accomplish its work through that very omnipotence which eighteen centuries ago raised the dead and governed stormful nature with a word. Let us accept the inference.

Only the supernatural can explain the preservation of Christianity from its early foes; only this can account for its progress amid the fermenting rationalism and deadly antagonism of such a world as this; and only the interposition of Almightyness can unravel the mystery of its power to save the sin-hardened and the sin-debased. Think but for a moment on the significance of such deliverances from iniquity. It is accepted as an axiom that sin propagates itself, and that it tends to enslave conscience and will, so that escape from its power is, humanly speaking, impossible. We cannot add one cubit to our stature, neither can we reverse the laws of growth and restore youth to the body. As Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Can a man enter his mother's womb a second time, and be born?" And this spiritual birth is just as surprising and marvelous. The laws governing the soul are reversed, and that which was dead is made alive. An incident is recorded in an English journal, and copied in the *Baptist Weekly*, of a murderer's conversion, which illustrates how wonderful is this experience. He was waiting execution, and in his cell he was heard repeating the words, "Hanged by the neck, and God have mercy on your soul." But he was unwilling to talk with any one on the subject of religion. A conversation with him was reported in a daily paper, and coming under the eye of a pious woman, she was impelled to visit him in prison. Her heart almost failed her. But taking a bunch of flowers she went. Admitted to his cell she could not speak, and all she could do was to hand him the flowers and weep. In a moment the man was changed. What he saw recalled home, mother and early years, and he realized his condition and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner." So wonderful a transformation can hardly be ascribed to means so slight and inadequate. No; what we behold is, as is generally the case with the supernatural, the Divine Being interposing

along the lines of the natural to effect a change as great as it was needful. Such instances are occurring daily, and in this congregation there are those who have been saved as marvelously. Drunkards, pugilists, harlots have been redeemed, and in almost every Christian assembly they may be found, clothed in their right mind and praising God. But in addition, we have the supernatural in prayer. That it is answered we have no doubt; not always, for then it would come to be classed with the natural, but with sufficient frequency to encourage, what is more important than the answer, constant soul-communion with the Almighty. But how are our petitions honored? Through the ministrations of angels? through impressions on the mind of the petitioner, so that by his own endeavors he obtains his desire? through influences brought to bear on others? or through some modification of the action of nature? Each of these explanations has been given, and by one or all of these means the result may be brought about; but on any of these suppositions the Creator comes near to the creature, and brings to pass ends which would otherwise be unaccomplished. Thus, then, every time we kneel, every time we breathe our supplications, we are on the border-land of the supernatural, and acknowledge its certitude and availableness. Oh! believe me, then, our religion is not a mere earth-born and earth-bound system. Every time you look imploringly toward the Invisible, every time you expect the conversion of a soul, you impliedly subscribe to this great truth; and, therefore, gladly assert it openly that none may be misled, but that all may be guided to the Supernatural for that present help which the Supernatural alone can give.

VIII.

THE POVERTY OF JESUS.

Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.
Matthew viii, 20.

IT is difficult to realize that to-day's great Christian festival — Easter Sunday — is commemorative of Him whose lips murmured these plaintive words. An effort of the imagination is needed to identify the Christ before whom the conscience, the affections, the intellect, and the genius of the most enlightened portion of the human family now lie prostrate in adoring homage, and to whom Nature brings her sweetest and loveliest floral offerings, and music the tribute of its sublimest and divinest harmonies, with the lowly Being who on the shores of Galilee eighteen centuries ago confessed Himself both homeless and shelterless. The contrast is nothing short of marvelous. Then He owned not the humblest roof in Palestine, and was poorer in earthly possessions than beast or bird; but now the stateliest cathedrals, the noblest basilicas, and the countless host of sacred buildings which grace and beautify so many favored lands are reverently recognized as His, and are freely consecrated to His service. And, stranger still, if His promise may be credited, "where two or three are met together in my name there am I in their midst," He is present in, and occupies them all. He who had no refuge, and whose "head was filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night," is now more splendidly housed than princes, and all that affection, affluence, and art can do to celebrate His praise

is gladly done. What a change! And what if the material splendor of His worship be but a faint symbol of the place He occupies in the regenerated heart? What if the flowers which breathe their life out on His altars be but fragrant signs of immortal souls, which joyfully exhale their strength in self-sacrificing devotion to His cause? What if the outburst of extolling song which fills the air with mystic sounds be but the accompaniment of an inner spiritual melody, which human voices can never sing, and man-made instruments can never play? And what if all this external magnificence and this internal veneration be but indistinct intimations of His exalted position in the universe, of His measureless dignity, of the love He inspires throughout the hosts of Heaven, and of the homage whereby He is forever magnified? Aye, what?

The poverty of Jesus was not of that abject and squalid type which all too frequently shocks our sensibilities and arouses our pity in modern times. He was by no means in so helpless and deplorable a plight as Lazarus, who begged an alms at the door of lordly Dives. We are not to think of Him as we do of our pauper classes, who are generally shiftless and spiritless. He was neither idle tramp nor shameless mendicant. Born in the ranks of the honest and industrious poor, He never knew ease or affluence, and was dependent on His own toil for His support. His reputed father was a carpenter, and He Himself seems to have followed the same handicraft, and up to the beginning of His ministry to have earned His daily bread in the sweat of His brow. Our manly artisans, with their modest rooms and their precarious incomes, fighting the battle of life under many unfavorable circumstances, present the most faithful picture of our Lord's social standing. When He engaged in His Messianic mission the pittance derived from His mechanical skill had to be sacrificed, and He was literally without pecuniary resources.

Friends and disciples were ready to minister to His necessities, but in worldly possessions the birds and the foxes were richer than He. What He said, therefore, to the ardent scribe who professed a willingness to follow Him, possibly with some expectation of personal advancement, was strictly true. He owned neither resting nor sleeping place. Although His situation was never as hopelessly wretched as that of some destitute persons in our cities, it was nevertheless sufficiently forlorn to embarrass Him, and to render His success problematical. But that He overcame all these difficulties is evident. We have full proof of it in the marvelous influence He has acquired over humanity, and in the commanding position His kingdom has attained on the earth. Now that one so humble should have risen so high, should have achieved so much in a domain as sacred as religion, and should have won a name which is indeed above every other name, is one of those wonderful and fruitful facts whose practical value is only equaled by its doctrinal significance. And it seems to me eminently wise to give it a place in our thoughts this evening, to explore it as a precious mine, that we may therefrom grow richer in our knowledge of Christ, and more abundant in our ability to overcome the adverse circumstances of life.

First, the poverty of Jesus, viewed in connection with His extraordinary exaltation, to my mind points to a nature superior to man's. I am aware that many men have risen, in spite of their surroundings, to enviable stations and influence. The cattle-tending of Keppler did not prevent him from becoming a great astronomer; the obscure origin and the early indigence of Beethoven did not hinder him from making himself one of the sublimest masters of harmony; the humble rank and manifold privations of Bernard Palissy did not keep him from success in his chosen department of work; the sheepfold and

scantiness of food and clothing did not stay the career of Giotto, the painter; the bird-calling and swine-herding of Felix Peretti did not prevent him ascending the chair of St. Peter as Pope Sixtus V; and all the diversified evils of the peasant's hard and unpromising lot could not stifle the genius of Burns. They rose to eminence in their various vocations in the face of fortune's frowns, and conquered the enemies which lay in their path. Their romantic and inspiring histories could be easily matched by thousands of others; for I presume it is not too much to say that a larger number of men have risen to greatness from the straw of the hovel than from the down of the palace. Our Homers, our Shakspeares, our Dürers, our Bunyans, our Bloomfields, our Clays, our Lincolns, our Garfields, and with them hosts of others whom we have not even time to name, were children of the poor, and struggled with the bitter evils of the poor man's station. Indeed, so vast has been the army of glorious workers who have emerged from the shadows of penury that Hans Holbein in his famous picture depicting the Triumph of Poverty, has hardly overpainted his theme when he represents this dreaded condition as a beautiful woman, who develops the latent energies of mind and leads the race onward toward civilization.

The fact, therefore, that Jesus has made Himself felt and has achieved abiding renown, though the circumstances of birth and social position were against Him, taken by itself proves nothing, or at most only proves that He is entitled to stand side by side with the poets and painters, the philosophers and statesmen, whose full heads were not to be shamed by the emptiness of their purses. If His success was exactly the same as theirs, then of course it does not indicate that His nature is in any essential respect different from theirs. In degree it may be higher; but in kind, if nothing more is to be said on the subject,

it cannot be looked on as other than identical. But there is something more to be added, and something that is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with the theory that He was man, and only man.

Remember the throne which our Savior has conquered. I allude not to that which sacred writers declare He fills in the heavens, but to that which He fills on the earth. What He is in the realms of the blest we can only infer from what He is in this sorrowful world. His exaltation there we cannot now verify by sight, but His elevation here lies within the range of our senses. We see Him the center of adoring homage, we hear His praises sung by rejoicing millions, and we feel His influence in every department of thought and activity. He is enthroned among men, and in a domain where He reigns alone and supreme. That domain is the conscience and the religious emotions, and there His scepter is without an equal. Your artists may give laws to the fancy, and your philosophers to the understanding; Christ alone gives laws to the heart. We know that poetry, that painting, that reason, that all which has been wrought in the name of beauty and of logic has ever failed to subdue the heart to righteousness and peace. The heart hath reared obstacles which have impeded their progress, and which have perverted their best endeavors to benefit it morally. But Jesus and His word have triumphed where every one else and everything else has been defeated. He alone overcomes natural antipathy to godliness, kindles the flame of devotion, and subdues the stubborn will to His service. His achievement, therefore, is without a parallel and without a rival, and, considered in the light of its exceptional and peculiar character, it implies a higher than human rank in the scale of being. This, it appears to me, would follow had His earthly condition been in every sense opulent; but being what it was, the inference seems irresistible.

Difficult as it is for any mere earth-born creature to obtain religious control of his fellows, it is painfully increased and magnified by the misfortunes of poverty. Admitting that Buddha and Mahomet are instances of success in the spiritual realm, let it not be overlooked that in social distinction these reformers were far in advance of our Savior. The Hindu sage was the son of a king, and there was much that appealed to the popular thought and imagination in the self-mortifying career of one who was destined to sovereignty. He represented the authority of the throne in his person, and the people were doubtless influenced by the weight of that authority to give heed to his teachings. The Arabian prophet was descended from a distinguished ancestry, and though his parents were poor, they were honored and honorable. Mahomet was not insensible to the disadvantages attending his impoverished condition, and sagaciously married Kadijah, a widow much older than himself, and whose affluence raised him far above want. Therefore could it be shown that these personages were the peers of our Lord in religious achievements, it yet remains evident that their external circumstances were more favorable than His to success. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the prophet relied on the sword, and that he and Siddartha skillfully allied the passions, the prejudices, the superstitions, and interests of the populace on their side. But so did not Christ. He neither had the means nor the disposition to employ violence in behalf of His kingdom. The doctrines He proclaimed challenged antagonism, and His ministry was ominous of danger to his native land. Indeed, His entire movement was more deeply spiritual and more broadly human than either of those with which it has so frequently been compared, and in fundamental features it was essentially different. We therefore reiterate the exceptional character of His work, and reaffirm

the conviction that His poverty would have rendered it vain had He not been endowed with a nature immeasurably grander than man's.

Consider in support of this view that Jesus was unaided by any of the helps, of which, in perhaps every other instance, poor men availed themselves in rising above their unpropitious condition. Many of them were assisted by the rich, who delighted to patronize undoubted genius; others were favored by the spirit of the times, as in the case of several of Napoleon's generals, or by the advantages of free institutions, as in the case of various American statesmen. We regret to add that quite a number were indebted for their elevation to their own talent for chicanery and duplicity, as in the case of Sixtus V, to whom already reference has been made, who, to secure the votes of the Conclave, simulated manifold infirmities, and who, when the Popedom was secured, threw away his crutches and derisively said, "When seeking for the keys of Paradise I was obliged to stoop a little, but now I have found them it becomes me to look up." It is surely unnecessary to say that Jesus never condescended to employ such trickery, and that He was practically without encouragement from the affluent and noble. No king was found to smile upon Him; no generous philanthropist contributed to His enterprise; and no happy turn of public affairs served to bring Him from undeserved obscurity. Nay, rather, His mean social standing tended to intensify the opposition of community toward Him as a religious teacher. The rulers of the nation had more than once been compromised by indigent fanatics, who, having nothing to lose themselves, were indifferent to the ruin their excesses brought on others. Their conservatism and prudence naturally led them to reject these self-styled prophets who were destitute of lands and houses. They reasoned that such teachers are generally extremists, the

enemies of law and order, who in their blind zeal inaugurate revolutions impossible to control. Thus we ourselves argue, and unfortunately with only too valid grounds. Has it not been a perpetual injury to the cause of the poor, even in temporalities, that in seeking redress from wrongs they become altogether too fierce and denunciatory, and too radical in their measures of reform? Untaught in the science of government, and taking only a superficial view of society, they propose remedies so fearfully heroic that they really kill the patient whom they desire to cure. The disjointed talk, the vain boasting and silly braggadocio, the wild and inexecutable programmes ending in the cloudland, cloudland surcharged with thunder-storms, of Socialism, and other vagaries which disfigure some of their conventions, alienate fair-minded and moderate citizens from their side, and strengthen prejudices which, though not without warrant, are mainly ungenerous and unjust. These prejudices, though by Him undeserved, were arrayed against Christ, and in His times they were deeper than they are now, and they unquestionably demanded more than human power to overcome.

Moreover, he had to encounter the strange aversion of men to what is claimed to be new light on the subject of religion. Even the most daring innovators in other departments of knowledge appear reluctant to admit any addition to what they have been taught in this. They generally fight it, and when compelled to accept it do so ungraciously, as though they were personally injured by the concession. It is said that when Faraday on one occasion was performing the experiment of eliciting a spark from a magnet, a dignified, dull-headed clergyman present, who dimly perceived what it meant, exclaimed in tones of mournful reproof, "I am sorry for it! I am sorry for it!" He turned slowly to reach the door that he might leave the room, and as he departed he repeated his wail,

“Indeed I am sorry for it! It’s putting new arms into the hands of the incendiary!” Alas for the Dean! he could not perceive the connection between these experiments and the light that shall yet blaze on sea and land, and which shall cheer many a lonely traveler and rescue many an imperiled mariner. If science at times is thus received, with yet greater suspicion is every spark emitted from learning or reflection that casts an illuminating ray on religion greeted. Especially is it unwelcome to the average mind, if he who sheds it on the darkness is of lowly origin and of impoverished estate. Julian the apostate never could get over the fact that Jesus had been a carpenter. To his aristocratic mind trade unfitted the Nazarene for the office of teacher. The thought of a mechanic presuming to guide him was more than he could tolerate. He was not alone in his prejudice. It was shared by the scribes and Pharisees, who, during the ministry of Jesus, objected that he was unknown to the schools. Now, how could such positive class bias be overcome? Certainly not by the distinguished social standing of Christ’s followers, for the rich and high-born, as a rule, failed to espouse His cause until it had practically established itself without them. What Jesus was to the world His immediate disciples were after Him—men of low estate and of inferior attainments. We are obliged, therefore, to look beyond the circle of the human for the explanation of the mystery.

If we do this everything is explicable. If we assume that the exaltation of Jesus from His penniless state to religious supremacy is attributable to the direct interposition of God, the problem in one sense is solved. But let it be remembered that Jesus claimed and accepted such homage as is forbidden a creature to encourage or receive. He represented Himself as the Son of the Highest—as one with the Father—and God’s approval of His work

carries with it the approval of His word. If, leaving out of sight this Divine interposition, we seek the elucidation of the enigma in a nature superior to man's, we cannot deny its sufficiency, and thus on either supposition the conclusion we have been aiming to reach by this argument is attained. What that nature is which He shares not with men, at this time I shall not attempt to define or discuss. It is enough for us to know that it is not of the earth, and cannot be measured by the standards of earth. Perhaps the true measure is implied in the answer of a saint, uttered on hearing the sneering question: "Where now is the carpenter Jesus?" propounded by one of Julian's officers. To which the saint responded: "He is busy making a coffin for thy master." And you, my brethren, can infer who He really is if, as is intimated in this reply, He holds in His hands the supreme power of life and death; and that He does so is the constant testimony of Scripture. There is only one sublime conclusion possible from premises so tremendous, and to that Schiller more than points when he sings, and sings in grander words than this poor tongue of mine can fashion:

"Friendless was the great world's Master;
And, feeling this, He made the spirit world
Blessed mirrors of His own blessedness!
And though the Highest found no equal,
Yet infinitude foams upward unto Him
From the vast basin of creation's realm."

Secondly. The unpromising surroundings of Jesus, considered in connection with His wonderful exaltation, as it appears to me, are freighted with lessons important to man. They teach us to despise the reproach of poverty. Why, as a condition of life, it should not be as honorable as any other, I never could quite understand. If it is judged by deeds, it is likely that in worth it will be found

to surpass all others. That which awakens family pride I suppose is ancestral achievements, for no particular glory can be derived from mere antiquity, as on that score we are all equal, having in common descended from Adam:

“From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.”

But if this is the case, then the poor have every reason to hold up their head, as they came out of right noble stock, the quality and abundance of the fruit it has borne being witness. Their forefathers were the earliest and most consistent friends of liberty, and but for the personal sacrifices of their order liberty would be unknown among us. They have likewise been the most faithful and persistent supporters of religion; and in the departments of science and discovery they have at least accomplished as much as any others, if not more. From their ranks have sprung great minds, great organizers, great scholars, great poets, and indeed greatness of every degree and character. Why, then, should anyone blush on account of such genealogy? Is not the name of Jesus, that Being from whom the world has received its chief blessings, enrolled among the poor? In taking upon Himself this condition has He not elevated it above that of princes and kings? And is it not absurd to be ashamed of that which He has sanctified? And is it not worse than absurd, is it not wicked, for those who have but recently escaped from poverty, and whose parents or grandparents were familiar with its trials, to speak slightly and superciliously of that which the Lord did not disdain?

But if, like our Savior, we should despise the reproach of poverty, we should also learn, like Him, to overcome its disabilities. Rest assured that man is not the slave of circumstances. They have been mastered, they can be

mastered still. There are instances in every city, and in every congregation, of success in this respect that should forever hush the complaints of those who feel that they can do nothing but bewail their lot. The great majority of our princely merchants, and of our leaders in art, science, religion and politics, made themselves what they are, laid the foundations of their fortunes, with their own hands, and, like Napoleon, with their own hands placed the crown of empire on their head. American society is a standing rebuke to those who fold their arms in inglorious apathy, and insist doggedly that they cannot contend with evil fortune. Believe them not, young men. To the manly soul all things are possible. Application, perseverance, courage, enterprise can remove as many mountains as faith, and more than faith can remove when it is destitute of these qualities. You would have blushed to have believed otherwise on the field of Buena Vista, where five thousand Americans confronted twenty thousand Mexicans. There you would have fought. And here, though the odds be as great against you, ignore your dreary fatalistic philosophy, and fight as earnestly as you would there, and the result will be as glorious.

One other lesson. In taking on Himself the life of poverty, it seems to me our Savior designed to illustrate the spiritual condition of humanity. The soul is destitute, hungry, naked, shelterless. It must have heavenly food or it dies; it must have righteousness for clothing, or it is exposed to wrath; it must have refuge from the storm of justice, or it perishes. Not more forlorn and helpless is a beggar's babe abandoned in the streets of a tempest-devastated city than is a soul left to itself in this world of bleak and howling evil. Here is indigence surpassing man's energy to subdue, indigence that can only be relieved by One greater than the race. That One is Jesus, who, though "He was rich, yet for your sakes became

poor that ye through His poverty might be rich." His exaltation, being what it is, we have the pledge that, as He hath ascended so high above His former lowly condition, He hath the power and the grace to meet the soul's spiritual necessities, and will, if trusted, "enrich it in everything to all bountifulness," causing therein "thanksgiving." Let us then take up the poet's exhortation, and with the voice of melodious desire exclaim:

"Gate of my heart, fly open wide —
Shrine of my heart spread forth;
The treasure will in thee abide,
Greater than heaven and earth.
Away with all this poor world's treasures,
And all this vain world's tasteless pleasures,
My treasure is in heaven;
For I have found true riches now,
My treasure, Christ, my Lord, art Thou,—
Thy blood so freely given."

IX.

THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.” *Mark viii, 38.*

DEAN TRENCH, in one of his earlier poems, describes a youth who had in vain sought religious consolation at the shrine of culture, and who, on becoming disheartened and discouraged, abandoned his home for a lonely abode in the desert. There with the arid wastes around him, and the frivolities of worldly society banished from him, he comes no nearer to the fount of peace than he did when enlightenment and refinement lavished their gifts upon him. His soul is unsatisfied, and craves what neither the solitudes of Nature nor the graces of culture could bestow. Embittered, disconsolate, despairing, he contemplates self-inflicted death, when his melancholy meditations are interrupted by an aged man, who tenderly seeks to know the source of his sorrow. The youth, drawn to the venerable father by the benignity of his manner, tells him the story of his failure, and confesses that all his endeavors have been unavailing to preserve his heart from impurity and sorrow. Touched by the recital, the reverend stranger reveals to him the cause of his disappointment and the means of its cure:

“You thought by efforts of your own
To take at last each jarring tone
Out of your life, till all should meet
In one majestic music sweet,

And deemed that in your own heart's ground.
The root of good was to be found.

* * * * *

But, thanks to Heaven, it is not so,
That root a richer soil doth know
Than our poor hearts could e'er supply—
That stream is from a source more high.
From God it came, to God returns,
Not nourished from our scanty urns,
But fed from His unfailing river,
Which runs and will run on forever."

This is Christ's doctrine. To the woman of Samaria He said: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." To which He adds: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In this passage He affirms, as He does in many others, that He Himself is the fountain of the soul's spirituality—the ultimate and all-sufficient means of its salvation. As the light which irradiates the globe is from above, as the rains that refresh the earth are from the clouds, and as the moon on high governs the ocean's tides below, so the influences which quicken the religious life of man are external to himself and come down from Heaven. Christ is the all-glorious and all-luminous orb that disperses the darkness which has gathered round faith and hope, and that regulates the surging tides of passionate desire; and He also is the gracious flood which sweeps away the vile brood and poison growth of sin, and that develops the wholesome and fragrant plants of righteousness and peace. Neither culture nor art, nor beauty can do what He does. His work is exceptional, peculiar and unapproachable. Hence, He claims to be "The Way, the Truth and the Life;" hence, He invites

the weary and heavy-laden to come unto Him, to embrace, trust, and appropriate Him, and hence it is that faith in Him becomes the starting-point of true discipleship.

A disciple is one who learns, one who learns with the view of practicing, and necessarily implies previous confidence in Him who is the teacher. Who would sit down at the feet of Plato, or Kant, or Proctor, or Darwin, without being satisfied of his ability to guide and enlighten? No one—at least no one in his senses. Believing that Newton or Bacon is supreme in his special department of inquiry, you submit your intellect to his instruction. You would not be willing to study art under him; for you are convinced that he is as unfitted to direct you in that department as Perugino or Raphael would be to teach in philosophy. Precisely in the same way, trust in the Son of God must precede, and is the indispensable condition of discipleship. There must be such confidence in Him that the mind will be constrained to abandon itself to His thought; and He, being the Redeemer from sin and sorrow, there must be such reliance on Him that heart and life will yield themselves freely to His influence. But this is not all. The Master insists that the scholar shall acknowledge Him, that he shall not blush for the school in which he learns, nor be ashamed of the wisdom he receives. He is to confess Him before men, to take up the cross, symbol of the fundamental Christian idea, and follow Him through evil as well as through good report. Nor is the demand unreasonable. A mere inquirer, like Nicodemus, may come to the Savior by night, but the anxious ruler was not then a disciple. Secrecy is inconsistent with faith. If we trust, instinctively we avow, unless restrained by some overmastering fear. A Pharisee or a Sadducee did not hesitate to make known the sect whose tenets he espoused; neither should we.

The Roman would not deny his allegiance to the imperial eagle which he defended; and in our day it would be regarded as baseness for a man to repudiate the mother who bore him, the country that sheltered him, or the college that educated him. Much more base is it for a soul which has accepted Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King, which has found in Him a glory greater than ever circled the ancient seven-hilled city, and received from Him favors which excel in grandeur all that parents, country, or school can confer, to be ashamed of Him or of His cause. Well might the indignant poet sing:

“Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
May evening blush to own a star.
Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon
Might midnight blush to think of noon —
'Twas midnight with my soul till He,
Bright Morning Star, bade darkness flee.”

Such also is the mind of Christ. He means to be acknowledged. The universe at last shall pay tribute to His name; for every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Christ to the glory of God the Father; but until then He commands that they who have received religious life from Him, and who depend upon His grace for their final glorification, shall openly, publicly, and without equivocation or hesitancy, manifest in character and conduct whose they are and whose they expect to be forevermore.

In character and conduct—but how, in what respect and in what degree, are disciples thus to proclaim their Lord and the relationship which exists between them? This is the special inquiry I desire to prosecute in the present discourse, and I hope it may prove serviceable to those who have already entered on the Christian course, and may encourage others to follow their example.

It may be well, for the sake of avoiding misconception,

that we discriminate between what is required of disciples in common, and the preservation of their individuality. We are not to suppose that the latter is to be sacrificed to the former; or, in other words, that personal identity is to be obliterated by religious profession. Such a thing in my judgment is really impossible, but it has been attempted, and probably still is, by a few misguided persons. The sacred orders of olden times undertook to shape the thinking, acting, and feeling of their members by one rule. They were to eat at the same hour and partake of the same food; they were to believe alike, sleep alike, pray alike, walk and talk alike; and to have the same sentiments and emotions, if, under the circumstances, emotions they could have at all. Every novice was to be squeezed into the same mold, or stretched and flattened to the prescribed height and breadth of orthodox proportions. But even monks would revolt occasionally from this mechanical process, which presupposed them to be merely clay, and assumed that their noblest destiny was, like other clay, to be shaped into bricks. Sometimes a round man resented the effort to put him into a square hole, and a tall one would not consent to be topped for the gratification of his shorter brethren. Such schemes have especially failed when attempted by Protestants, to the genius of whose religion they are utterly alien. Even our good Quaker friends, whose sincerity and piety we esteem, were unable to overcome the natural distinctions which separate man from man. They might wear the same colored coats and have them cut in the same way, and they might conform speech and action to one prescribed form, nevertheless their individuality would assert itself and deride the artifices by which for a season it had been obscured. We never can succeed in making all Christians take identical views of what they should wear, what amusements they should encourage, what branch of religious usefulness they

should follow, and what social regulations they should adopt. It is absurd to think otherwise, and equally as undesirable as unreasonable.

In the New Testament we find nothing to encourage such folly. There the disciples are presented as differing from each other. They are one in all the essentials of their confession, but they are manifold as human beings. The personal peculiarities of Peter, John, and the rest are clearly discernible beneath the vestments of their religious calling. Peter is bold, impetuous, and sensitive; John is zealous, affectionate, and sympathetic; Thomas is cold, cautious, and skeptical; James is practical, energetic, and vehement; Philip is thoughtful, inquiring and decisive; and Simon, called Zelotes, most likely was fervent, radical, and just a little fanatical. They were good men and true, but no one of them could have been mistaken for the other. A few of them were men of decided ability, and rose preëminently above their brethren in intellectual power and executive skill. But we really know very little of the majority of those who were apostles. They lived and toiled unnoticed, and died unsung, not even their great office being able to redeem them from obscurity. As it is in every department of thought and action, a few were qualified to be leaders, and the others, though of equal rank, were obliged to follow. From all of which we may learn that discipleship is compatible with every variety of endowment, and that the Kingdom of Christ is broad enough, and sufficiently free from dictation regarding matters of meat, drink, dress, and forms of worship, to allow all kinds of personal qualities free play and ample scope. Indeed, the power of God's Kingdom in the earth is largely due to the multiplied gifts which it has enlisted in its service. It has used all talents, aptitudes, and peculiarities, and they have reached and influenced classes of people to whom they were ex-

actly adapted. Genius in the Church has swayed genius in the world; sagacity, courage, enterprise have affected for good those individuals in society who have an affinity for such qualities. Thus diversity within has touched diversity without; and apart from it, little if anything would be accomplished in religion to-day. It is, therefore, the duty of every Christian to preserve his identity, to be himself under all circumstances, and to bring to bear on the spiritual well-being of his fellow-creatures the entire force of his personality.

This point being guarded, we are prepared to consider the common and indispensable features of true discipleship. Christ demands that He Himself and His words shall be confessed; or to employ a term that comprehends both ideas—Christianity—He demands that that shall be avowed in character and conduct. Now, if we can only determine what are the predominant traits of the Christian system, we can very readily decide on what is involved in this requirement. In attempting this, I submit the following propositions and corollaries:

First. Christianity is a positive system, and disciples must therefore be uncompromising in character and conduct. It is altogether a mistake to suppose that Jesus came into the world to say nothing definite. He had ideas and they were expressed clearly and sharply. There is not an instance in His ministry of His repudiating, modifying, or obscuring truth for the sake of pleasing high or low, rich or poor. He was faithful to the light that was in Him. His teachings were not as the uncertain dawn, but as the sun; not as the colors, mingling confusedly with each other, of the aurora borealis, but as the sharp outlines of the stars, and like sun and stars He shed His luster unhesitatingly on the world. The religion He founded has likewise something to say. It may only be an echo of His word, but it is an unmistakable echo. The

doctrines it proclaims are identical with His, but they are doctrines. An evil day it was when the authority of what was revealed was treated lightly, and when a worldly party in the Church began to adopt heathen rites and customs, and sought to assimilate the teachings of Christ to pagan philosophy. The door was then opened for the incoming of errors, which have bred ecclesiastical divisions and prepared the way for the heresy of our own times, which proclaims that it is unimportant what a man believes if he is only sincere, and that Jesus never intended that His words should be interpreted strictly and literally, but only fluidly and figuratively. We already see the outcome of these pernicious sentiments. With the decay of doctrine has come the decay of faith, and the more truth's authority has been questioned piety's vigor has been diminished. If disciples would be like their Master, and if they would share in His ministry, they must stand by the truth. They must neither sell it nor betray it, nor refine it, nor distill it; and they must at all times and under all disadvantages, declare, define, and defend it. Not, however, alone must this be done by speech, but by deeds as well. The truth must be lived as well as taught. And herein lies the essential distinction between the true and the false disciple. The latter is uncompromising in dogma only; the former is equally uncompromising in conduct. The genuine follower of Christ tries to reduce to practice what he believes, and will sturdily refuse to comply with such usages of trade or society as are incompatible with his profession. Whenever such a man is found he is verily a living and illustrated epistle of the faith he holds, which every one can read and understand without an interpreter.

Secondly. Christianity is a self-sacrificing system, and disciples must, therefore, be unselfish in character and conduct. It is founded on the self-abnegation and self-sur-

render of its Head. Whatever may be the correct view to take of His sufferings and death, it cannot be denied that they were for the good of mankind. Jesus was not influenced by a single selfish motive or feeling in all that He did, and in all that He endured. He gave Himself for others. This is the sublime spirit of redemption. God yields up Himself, Christ yields up Himself, and the Church is to yield up herself for the undeserving and wretched. You remember how the nation and the world turned toward you as a city in the time of your calamity, how their sympathy and gifts poured in upon you as the many-mouthed river pours its floods from many sources into the sea. And thus there is an overflowing of all that is good and gracious in the universe toward our earth, stricken, ravaged, desolated by what is infinitely more terrible than fire. Can you not therefore perceive how contradictory and anomalous the position of the religious professor is who, satisfied with his own fancied security, never feels and never manifests the least solicitude for the salvation of his fellow-creatures? This is strikingly illustrated by Aldrich's Jerome, in his poem entitled the *Beautiful Book*. You may remember that the friar was anxious to do something to win God's favor, and undertook to illuminate the pages of the Apocalypse. This delightful work so engaged his time and thought that he neglected the poor, and became oblivious even to the plague which was decimating the village and monastery alike. At last he came to paint the image of the Lord in the terrible glory of the Second Advent, but his hand had lost its cunning, the colors refused to express his thought, and as he meditated on this strange inability, he realized that he had been selfishly engaged in seeking his own — his own salvation, his own pleasure and fame. Mortified at the discovery, he drew the cowl over his head, laid aside his brushes, and went down among the sick and dying to

minister to their needs. Nor did he return until he himself was smitten with the fatal disease. Then did he totter back to his easel, and his beautiful book. He knelt before it that he might undertake devoutly to complete it. But to his surprise he saw that some angel hand had finished the work, and in a manner surpassing human skill. When one of his brother monks entered his cell, he found him on his knees — dead. This legend has its counterpart in the life of many a disciple. Absorbed in some congenial pursuit, it may be money-making, fame-making, and even sermon-making, not unfrequently he quite overlooks the sufferings and sorrows of the millions around him. The *Beautiful Book* must not go unfinished, however the necessities of men must be neglected in zeal for its perfection. It is not realized that attendance to the wants of others would call down Heaven's blessing and Heaven's aid, and that the object of ambition might be more grandly attained, as it was in the case of Jerome, by greater self-forgetfulness and a larger sympathy with the unfortunate. No, instead of this, the soul is given to its own, its own longings, its own welfare, its own glory. Alas! that this abnormal spirit should be as prevalent as it is, and that many should fail to realize that it is absolutely irreconcilable with their vows. They have declared themselves cross-bearers for Jesus' sake, and their whole endeavor seems to be, not merely to escape the cross, but to be borne in a chariot of ease to the sky. These men and women who have espoused a self-denying faith are as hard to please, are as exacting, stand as rigidly on their rights, and are as unwilling to submit to inconveniencies even though the prosperity of Christ's Kingdom may depend upon their action, as the haughty pagan who resents the slightest opposition to his will. They reverse the principle of our Lord's mission — they demand to be ministered unto and never to minister to

others. My brethren, if any of you err in this direction, permit me to remind you that the great world will measure the spirit of the religion you profess by your self-sacrificing character. If you are generous and disinterested, if you are self-denying, and self-forgetful, it will be readily believed that these qualities reflect the genius of the faith you represent; but if you are otherwise, religion will be regarded as equally selfish with yourselves, and very little concern will be felt about its claims.

Thirdly. Christianity is a cosmopolitan system, and disciples must therefore be unprejudiced in character and conduct. The truth that Jesus revealed and the salvation He secured are designed for all nations, and are fitted to their necessities. They are adapted to the wants of all classes and peoples, and should be freely offered to them. The followers of Christ cannot consistently be exclusive and restrictive. They cannot do their duty if they fail to recognize a brother-soul in every man, whatever his color, his profession, or pursuit. The silly prejudices of society the Church should rise above and disdain. Why should not the Gospel be sent to foreign lands? Why should it be withheld from the Indian, the African, or the Chinese in our own? Do you reply that you entertain what seems an unconquerable aversion to these aliens, and that what you do in Christ's name you prefer to do for those nearer home and of your own race? But at this point arises a serious issue between you and your Master. He says, "Preach the Gospel to every creature—to all nations," and you decline. But is it right for the servant to place himself above the Lord? Is it safe to revise the orders He has given, and under which we are expected to work? Only one answer can be given to such inquiries. It is His office to command; it is our duty to obey. Prejudices may also weaken the hold of truth upon us, may blind us to its meaning, and thus may neutralize its power. For instance,

in the primitive period how difficult would it be for a Jew to reconcile himself to a faith founded on what seemed to be a penal execution, that practically ignored all that was venerable to his sires, whether in temple, ordinances, or traditions, and that swept away at one stroke privileges and expectations which had been the glory of the nation for ages. Similarly difficult is it to overcome antipathies which the free-thinking portion of the community has fostered by caricatures of the atonement and by distorted representations of other doctrines. But if disciples are governed by them they fall into a very serious error, and are sure to say or do things which they will ultimately regret. If they would be true to their obligations they must rise above prejudice, and must deal with men and things according to knowledge, and on the basis of absolute justice. This is the spirit of the religion they profess, and it must shine through them if they would win others to the faith of the Gospel.

Fourthly. Christianity is a spiritual system, and disciples must, therefore, be unworldly in character and conduct. "My Kingdom," said Jesus, "is not of this world." It teaches that we should set our affections on things above—should live for the unseen, and should walk in holy fellowship with God. Christianity came to overthrow the dominion of the temporal and fleeting, to emancipate man from bondage to the sensual and material, and to open his eyes to invisible glories and his heart to sanctifying influences. But if the avowed follower of Jesus is as deeply concerned in the things of earth as others are, if he is a slave to its ambitions, a worshiper of its distinctions, a lover of its pleasures, he fails to express an adequate idea of the faith which he claims to represent. Of course, being in the world, there are duties he owes it, relations to be sustained with it, and joys to be derived from it. No one can reasonably object to these things. But when

the world is supreme in thought and desire, and religion subordinate, when the whole tenor of the life creates the impression that the first is more important than the second, then he is a living contradiction of all he professes. For him to be an ardent admirer of the world and a devotee at its shrine, or for him to copy Redwald, the first royal Saxon converted to Christianity, and rear in the same Church one altar to the Lord and another to devils, is for him to declare that the one is as worthy an object of devotion as the other. This is misleading. It is calculated to do irreparable injury to thousands, and is necessarily an inexcusable perversion of the testimony which, as a witness for Christ, the disciple is commissioned to bear.

These four characteristics, added to faith in Christ, are essential to true discipleship, and these are adumbrated in the ordinance of baptism. The element, water, being a universal element, beating on all shores, flowing through all lands, drifting in all clouds, is an expressive symbol of the expansiveness which condemns prejudice. Its purity, as seen in the dew-drop and the mountain stream, and which is an inherent property, fitly suggests that spirituality which should never be contaminated by worldliness; and the act of immersion being a burial of the body in a liquid grave in obedience to a positive command, signifies two things—the surrender of the old, selfish man to death, and the submission of the will to the law of God without attempt to evade its import or to trifle with its authority. Baptism likewise and primarily refers to the leading articles of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of the soul from spiritual death, and the resurrection of the body from the grave. But of these I speak not. It is enough to remind you that its reception is the formal and figurative declaration that you are a disciple, an uncompromising, unselfish, unprejudiced, and unworldly follower of Jesus.

Glorious are the privileges of those who have thus avowed the Lord to be their Lord. They are taught by Him. By His indwelling spirit He makes them more and more familiar with His truth. They attain the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; they learn Him, as an apostle phrases it, and they are enriched in all spiritual wisdom. Moreover, He confesses them. Though they may be obscure, lowly, despised, He is not ashamed of them. He acknowledges them by coming to them in their solitude, by vindicating them in the time of their persecution, by delivering them from the power of temptation and from the bitterness of sorrow. In death He will not forsake them; and on that day, concerning which the poet sings, He will not fail to befriend them:

“The dreadful day, the day of ire,
Shall kindle the avenging fire
Around the expiring world.
And earth as Sibyl said of old,
And as the prophet King foretold,
Shall be in ruin hurled.”

On that day,

“He will not blush to own their name
Before His Father's face,
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint their soul a place.”

Ye who have not despised Him on the cross, He will not disdain from His throne; ye who have honored Him in His humility, He will magnify in His glory; ye who have not been ashamed to acknowledge Him before a sinful and adulterous generation, He will not be ashamed to own when He cometh to make up His jewels, and to own before an assembled universe.

What terms then can express the dignity of true discipleship! They who sustain it worthily are called “kings and priests;” and they are described as “heirs of God and

joint heirs with Christ." In possessions they outrank the most affluent of those who have only earthly treasures; in honors they excel the lords of this poor world, for they are a God-chosen generation, a royal priesthood; and in real greatness they surpass the poets, the painters, the soldiers, whose chief and sole endowment is genius; for they are enriched with virtues whose bloom shall never fade and whose fragrance shall never perish. Ah, ye who are panting to excel, ye who are coveting distinction, ye who are thirsting for wealth, here lie excellence, honor, and abundance at your door. Take up your cross, become the Lord's disciples, and your worth shall be more precious than rubies, and your glory more resplendent and enduring than suns that burn and stars that shine.

"The Cross! O ravishment and bliss—
How grateful e'en its anguish is,
Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
Taste happiness complete.

Souls, once enabled to disdain
Base, sublunary joys, maintain
Their dignity secure;
'The fever of desire is passed,
And love has all its genuine taste,
Is delicate and pure."

X.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit ; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” — *John iv*, 23, 24.

WHEN Abraham ascended Mount Moriah to honor Jehovah by a stupendous exercise of faith, it is said that he went there to worship. This is the first time the word occurs in the Bible history of religious development, though we have previous traces of what it imports in the offerings of Cain and Abel and in the altar on which Noah sacrificed after the flood. An illustration of its essential meaning we doubtless possess in the simple record, “The man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord”; for here the outward reverence expresses the inward homage, and the bent form of the patriarch’s servant is indicative of awe and adoration. And this example is the more significant from the fact that it is not associated with a sacred building, hallowed season, or splendid ritual. Beneath the cloudless sky, by an open well, near to the city of Nahor, in the plains of Mesopotamia, the human soul, unaided by priest or temple, prostrates itself in praiseful gratitude before the Divine Spirit. Other instances throughout the Scriptures are only variations of this fundamental conception. That is called “worship” by the pen of inspiration when the people stand spell-bound and silent in the door of their tents as the Lord talks with Moses on the threshold of the Tabernacle ; and the

same term is applied to the solemn act of consecration by which a tenth of worldly increase was devoted to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When Job humbled himself submissively before the sovereign will of the Highest, recognizing His right to the possessions of His creatures, it is written that he worshiped. So is it written of the Magi when they laid at the feet of the infant Jesus their gifts of myrrh, frankincense, and gold; and when the Syrophenician woman implored Christ for her daughter, and when the leper cried, "If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean," and when the disciples in the tempest ascribed Divine Sonship to the Nazarene, and when after the resurrection they held Him, lovingly clutching His feet, and when the redeemed in heaven poured forth the mighty song, "Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever," it is declared of one and all that they worshiped.

How frequently have commonplace events led to exceptional and unexpected results. The fall of an apple, the flight of a kite, the agitation of a kettle's lid, the tremor of a dead frog's limbs, and modern science comes to its birth; gravitation, steam, electricity, are disclosed, and Newton, Galvani, Volta, Edison become famous. An empty treasury in Rome leads to an open Bible in Germany, and friendly words uttered at a monastery gate prepare the way for the discovery of hospitable America; and the mediocre statesmanship and stupid arrogance of the court attached to the person of his majesty, George of England, call forth the Declaration of Independence and that affluence of liberty enjoyed by our people to-day. Charles Darwin wrote in 1837 that he was greatly impressed "with the character of South American fossils and the species on Galapago's Archipelago;" and this experience, not in anywise extraordinary, wrought itself out in a new philosophy of nature which has shaken old theories and been epoch-making in its influence.

And similarly, from circumstances of no remarkable significance, a doctrine was shaped and enunciated by the Christ, which was destined to revolutionize the views hitherto held concerning the relations and intercourse between the Creator and the creature.

The scene where this utterance occurred was near the very ordinary Samaritan city, called Sychar, by a venerable well, where an ordinary woman was drawing water, and where the ordinary infirmity of thirst caused Jesus to request at her hands a drink. This common-place craving suggests needs other and graver than those of the body, and the Divine Teacher converses with the woman concerning the soul and the gift of God provided for its satisfaction. Higher and higher goes the preacher in His discourse, stimulated, so to speak, by the questions of His companion, until at last the summit is reached — a thought-peak sun-lit above the clouds — revealing to those who dare follow Him the sublimest aspects of our faith, the real meeting point of the finite and the Infinite, and the true way of approach for such beings as we are into the presence of the invisible God. And in this manner He disclosed, for the guidance of all generations, the genius of religion, employing the term 'religion' in its highest sense as describing the outgoing of the heart to the Supreme Being, and of its communion with Him.

Our Saviour taught the woman of Samaria that the character of our praise and service will be determined by the conception formed of the nature of God. He affirms that Spirit can only be worshiped by spirit. When the Athenian builds an altar, as he is ignorant of the Uncaused Existence, to whom can he dedicate it if not to the "Unknown;" and in what way can he render tribute to the "Undiscovered" if not by eloquent silence? How shall the agnostic of our time express his reverent recognition of the "Infinitely Possible" except by an indefinite and inarticulate piety, as indefinite and vague as its object? Throughout

the Old Testament idolatry debases the people who submit to its supremacy. Ashtoreth, Baal, and Moloch are ever honored according to their kind by lust, ostentation, and cruelty. Readers of the Apocalypse must have been impressed by what they have read of a "beast" and of his "worship." (*Rev. xiii*; also *xvii*.) The contrast between this awful adulation and the adoration of the Father, is doubtless designed and is fearfully significant. I have thought that reference is made to the origin of this blasphemy where it is written of the heathen that they "changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature." (*Rom. i, 25*.) And if we would form an idea of their ritual we have it in the damning rubric: "unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, deceit" (*v. 29*). How shall the animal man be worshiped, if not by animalism? Is the Man of Sin described by Paul (*2 Thess. ii, 4*) a phase of this exaltation of the creature, and is his "sitting in the temple and showing himself as God" the final stage in the history of blasphemy, a deification of humanity that shall prove in the end to be sensual and devilish?

The Positive Philosophy already has idealized the race, and would rear an altar and establish a cult in its honor. Sacerdotalism has invested its chief with divine attributes, and has tendered a homage beyond what any mortal is entitled to receive. Can it be that in one or both of these remarkable movements we have the crowning manifestation of creature worship? Unquestionably its spirit is involved in both, whether either shall prove the climax of the Apostasy or not. Now John declares that the "beast" has a "mark," and that it is imprinted on its followers; and thus we return to our starting-point, that religious service will bear a distinct resemblance to the being served. An old book laid down the rule, "that a worshiper will become assimilated to the object worshiped"; he will offer an idol

as far as he can — and an idol is not a god, but the image of a god — and he will take to himself the spiritual lineaments of the idol. I leave you to picture what this “mark of the beast” must be, what pride, ostentation, presumption, bigotry, selfishness, and superstition must enter into it as an organized ceremonial, and what vanity, haughtiness, greed, cruelty, passion, and sensuality must distinguish it as an infamous life. We cannot discuss this matter further; and, indeed, have only referred to it as a significant illustration of the principle that underlies our Lord’s statement: “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

What then is most needful, if we would worship right, is to think of God aright. WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HE? Two great doctrines on this subject were held respectively by leaders in the Greek and Latin churches during the first four centuries of our era, and have exerted no small influence on theological thought ever since. The first of these schools regarded the Almighty as mainly immanent, as indwelling in His works, and would have sympathized with Wordsworth’s conception: —

“A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.”

It considered the universe as His body, and He Himself a soul, *the soul*, who shapes from within all forms of grandeur and of beauty. Giordano Bruno reverently called Him “the Interior Artist,” as though he were a subtle genius inhabiting the marble that from within developed it into a statue of Apollo or of Venus. This conception, carried too far, has given us out and out Pantheism; and when maintained, though not extremely, as an exclusive and all-sufficient view, has given the world the gospel of “light and sweetness” and the cult of beauty, music, picture, poetry. In the little

circles where it prevails, much is heard of "the nameless thought, the nameless power, the super-personal heart"; but as was predicted by the new Plato, the church founded thereon is "cold and naked, a babe in a manger." Augustine and the Latin Christians generally, almost entirely ignored this fascinating speculation, and laid stress on the Divine personality. To them he was preëminently an individual like themselves, a being exaggerated to infinitude, ruling from without, creating by acting externally on the material he had called into existence, and superintending with a wise oversight every province of his illimitable domain. From this basal concept there was made to follow doctrines of unchangeable decrees, elections and reprobations, and other expressions of a personality, which in the nature of things is omnipotent, and cannot be resisted and must not be challenged by mere creatures. While some unattractive systems of theology have been built on this foundation, it cannot be denied that it has possessed an immense power over the human imagination, and has inspired many notable religious achievements. The worship it has promoted, though varying from extreme simplicity to excessive splendor, has consisted largely in special acts of homage such as an imperial temporal sovereign may be supposed to delight in, and in building sacred places and observing sacred times, and in other things bordering occasionally on the superstitious, which are believed to be as necessary to His honor as the forms and conventionalities of a royal court are considered indispensable to the dignity of an earthly monarch.

Of these two theologies I am persuaded the latter has more to show for itself in deeds accomplished, is the more vigorous of the two, and produces a deeper impression on the uneducated mind. If the former is more directly philanthropic or benevolent, its rival is certainly more potent ethically and religiously. But I am convinced that we shall err if we accept the one to the exclusion of the other. Jesus

unites them, and I dare not divorce them ; they are eternally one. Christ speaks of God as " Spirit," as the indwelling soul, as the breath, yea, the life of all things ; and then as the " Father," the personal, the One who loves, thinks, hears, sympathizes, wills, and who is not far from every one of us.

Do you ask me to harmonize these views? *He has not*; I CANNOT. Human thought is not equal to the task ; or, supposing that it could approximate in its profounder reveries to the truth, human speech is not equal to the statement of so blessed and bewildering a mystery. Enough for us to know that God is in His works as a soul and over them as a ruler ; that He is impersonal enough to be the life of life and yet sufficiently personal to be addressed in prayer, to be trusted and loved, and sufficiently so to be " Our Father." This title reveals, so to speak, the supreme ethical character of the Being termed " Spirit." Herder and Lessing agree that our Lord taught : " God is my Father or the Father of all men, and all men are brothers," and I cannot interpret His speech in any other way. Latin theology questions, and its most arid and rigid school even denies this conclusion. It asserts that God is only father to the elect, to those who have been called from darkness into light ; and that all others are the offspring of wrath and the devil. According to these teachings, the innocent babe playing idly with the flowers, and the fair child sickening to death, and the young mother whose days have been spent in purity, yea, and gladsome maidens beautiful in virginal spotlessness, are all " children of the devil," who cannot be taught to pray " Our Father " without being taught a lie, and who are, in fact, outcasts and orphans for no fault of their own. I do not believe it. Lessing and Herder, in my opinion, reflect the mind of the Master on this point more faithfully than Augustine and Calvin ; and whether I can reconcile the conviction with some unchallenged theological dogmas or not, I must

still hold to the universal Fatherhood of God. Though humanity through sin denies its sonship, though it may repudiate the Divine Parent, and like the prodigal have wandered into a far country, and though it needs the renewal of the Holy Ghost to impart the consciousness of adoption, God is still the FATHER seeking to save the lost and wayward child.

Oh, my brethren, there is something to inspire worship in such a sublime conception, — a being who is all-pervasive Spirit, who fills immensity with Himself, and who is also Father, loving with a Father's heart the poorest and meanest of his creatures. Who can hear this and not worship? Have you ever read the fable: "Orpheus took the lyre and sang of Chaos, and of the making of the marvelous world, and how all things sprang from love, who could not live alone in the abyss. And as he sang his voice rose from the cave, above the crags and through the tree-tops. And the trees bowed their heads when they heard it, and the gray rocks cracked and rang, and the forest beasts crept near to listen, and the birds forsook their nests and hovered round"? that is, all nature worshiped. And is it possible that a man should picture such a response on the part of things inanimate to the announcement of love, and humanity not be moved to adoration by the revelation Jesus has given of the Infinite One? Well did Charles Lamb say, when discussing with friends how they should receive the greatest of men were he to return from the dead, "Were Shakespeare to enter this room we would rise; were Jesus to enter we would kneel." He as the revealer of the Father, and He Himself as the personal expression of that Father's shoreless love, has spoken such a word and been such a WORD that the only conceivable answer to it is worship: we can as we hear and see think of nothing less than how to pour forth our praise. *We cannot stand; we kneel — we* **WORSHIP, WORSHIP, WORSHIP!**

Aye, but how? The Master hears the question and, smil-

ing sweetly, answers, "Why, in what other way than in spirit and in truth? for as the Father is Spirit, only such worship is worship in His sight."

It has been doubted whether in view of Christ's disclosure of the Divine nature He ever intended to sanction anything like a public service, anything even remotely similar to the religious rites of the Hebrews, or anything corresponding to modern Sunday observances in Christian churches. If the doubt were otherwise expressed, I do not think it would be longer entertained. Were it asked, Did Jesus contemplate as the principal thing—even the exclusive thing—a ceremonial, a cult, however unobjectionable, and was this all He had before Him in His discourse at Jacob's well? I would unhesitatingly reply in the negative; but were it asked if He approved of such a measure or office and designed it to be tributary to His main intent, I would promptly return an affirmative answer. That there were congregational meetings for prayer, praise, and instruction in New Testament times must be conceded, and that they were to be of perpetual observance is equally evident. On command and example emanating from the highest source rest the church-idea and church-order that have constantly commended themselves to the mind and heart of believers. But that the supreme aim of our Lord was not the establishment of this is apparent from the fact that He gives no specific instructions for the regulating of public service,—no forms, no rubric,—and leaves, after unfolding fundamental principles, the details of mode and fashion to be determined by each body of people for itself. If I understand Him and the apostles aright, it is the business of the Church to illustrate and actualize in her services the worship described in the Scripture we are studying; but they did not purpose it should end there,—rather that it should begin there, and become the every-day life and habit of all peoples. She is to represent to the eye and—more than that—maintain the

consciousness of man's relations with the Supreme and the privileges and duties they involve; and what she seeks to accomplish at particular periods and through specific acts humanity is to experience and express at all times and in every deed performed. It is wrong to say that worship is not a function of the saints collectively, that is, of the Church; it were equally indefensible to claim that it is not a function of the saints separately, that is, of the individual; and it were worse than all to affirm that essentially, in fundamentals, what is offered by the unit may be different from what ought to be offered by the aggregate, or that in the congregation it is permitted to be otherwise than as is enjoined on the individual believer. When the Etruscan artist prepared a ring, as the pure metal was too soft to bear hammer or file, he alloyed the material that it might possess the necessary quality of resistance. The circlet once formed and ornamented, he disengaged the alloy, and the pure gold remained. Now, similarly, our Lord is seeking to perfect worship; but He has to employ an inferior element, a specific institution with its poor exercises, to accomplish His end. But this, like the alloy, is transitory; and when His purpose is triumphant in the heavenly state, it also shall be eliminated, and only the pure gold continue.

We shall contribute to the consummation of this design if we only try to comprehend and apply the characteristics of true worship which Jesus unfolded to the woman of Samaria, and which were necessarily fixed and determined, not by arbitrary enactment, but as He taught, by the nature of the being whom He revealed as its object. They are only two, "SPIRIT," "TRUTH," — heart, head; emotion, intelligence; — the whole man going forth to lose itself in fellowship with the Unseen. Hence, Hegel writes truly, "Worship is primarily an inward act of faith, the living communion of the Ego with God." "If God speaks, He speaks spiritually; for spirit reveals itself to spirit only." "The end and aim

of worship is self-sacrifice, self-renunciation, and the appropriation of the Divine grace."

Let us look a little more closely at the two supreme conditions announced by Christ. By the former of the two comprehensive terms employed by the Savior there is forever swept away a tissue of ideas that had wrought much mischief in the ancient world. It is a word of emancipation, and would have proven so, if the senses had not again led multitudes of believers back into bondage. The Samaritan woman had inquired of Jesus whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the sacred spot where worship was rendered acceptable; and His answer was in effect that place had nothing to do with it whatever, that neither buildings nor soil could impart sanctity to the soul's intercourse with its Maker. What a revolutionary utterance was this! what an upturning of venerable tradition and of popular prejudice! Had our Lord forgotten that Balaam had associated Deity with certain localities, and had sought out a particular spot where he could curse with impunity the white tents of Israel? Had He lost sight of the fact that Elkanah and Hannah went up to Shiloh, where the ark was, to worship; that Daniel looked toward Jerusalem when he prayed in Babylon; and that on the revolt of the ten tribes, for political reasons, it was deemed important that the rebels should be convinced that Dan and Bethel were as sacred as Mount Zion? No; Jesus had not overlooked these significant incidents in the history of His race or others like them; only the hour had arrived for this childishness to end, and He announced to His solitary listener the transition to the era of manliness. Henceforward neither in Gerizim, O Samaritan! nor in Jerusalem, O Jew! shall men worship; but everywhere, even where the ground is not consecrated, there the human spirit can have commerce with the Eternal Spirit. Paul, the apostle, interprets Christ when he writes to the Philippians, "We are of the circumcision which worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have

no confidence in the flesh"; and he gives us the real philosophy of his Master's doctrine in the discourse which he delivered on Mars' Hill (*Acts xvii, 24-30*), in which he argues that, as the Lord is ruler of heaven and earth, He cannot dwell in temples made with hands nor be moved with material offerings, as though He needed anything; neither is there one people who have access into His presence to the exclusion of others; for all are His offspring, and of one blood has He made all who dwell on the earth, and all live and move and have their being in Him. But, my brethren, this comment and exposition goes farther even than to deny to locality any special holiness; it also denies that any particular season or any class or any individual is longer to be regarded as necessary to impart worth or value to religious service. We are all intemped in God, and we are, therefore, as near to Him as any priest or minister; and wherever we are and whenever we please, without the aid of human mediator, we can hold communion with Him.

Surely at this late day we ought not to shrink from receiving to the full our Lord's declarations on these points. There is no longer a priestly order, no men anointed and consecrated, to render possible the soul's intercourse with the Almighty. We have preachers, teachers, officials in the interest of wise administration, but no sacerdotal *nexus* between the creature and Creator, for the race itself is homed in the Infinite. Nor is there any building more redolent with sanctity than the wildest glen, or the most desolate mountain summit, or the most wretched hovel. Remember God is a Spirit, and is everywhere; and He has therefore rendered the entire universe a holy place, fitted to quicken religious aspirations and praise. Nay, we have not even in the ritualist's sense a sacred time. The Sabbath of the Jews passed away with their priesthood and their temple. Luther was not far wrong, though not wholly right, when, referring to the seventh day's rest he writes: "If anywhere the day is made holy for the

mere day's sake, then I command you . . . do anything that will reprove this encroachment on Christian spirit and liberty." I believe that all time is sacred, and all acts that are not morally wrong or tend to evil are sacred, too. In other words, in this world, there can only be two qualities, — the sacred and the profane ; and these cannot be affirmed of things, but of motives and of acts. The whole world is sacred, as God dwells in it ; humanity is essentially sacred, as God hath redeemed it ; marred, however, by the profane, or the sinful, seeking to subdue and to destroy it. All time is sacred, for there is no day in all the year in which men are permitted to do evil, nor any moment not subcharged with the omnipresence of the Almighty. In common with multitudes of other Christians I have held for many years that the old Mosaical Sabbath, especially as encumbered by traditional observances of the later Jews, was superseded by the Christian Sunday, which is to be observed as a day of rest ; and, therefore, I believe in the suspension, so far as possible, of all toil, and in the importance of preserving the day for the best interests of the working people. Also that it should be devoted to worship, the development of man's higher nature, and to rejoicing — not meaning by the latter term amusements, which certainly would neither promote nor advance the broader or deeper culture of the race, but the indulgence of all glad feelings and emotions springing from our recognition of God's goodness both in providence and redemption. I deem it a grievous error, growing out of times less enlightened than our own, to draw a sharp line between the religious and the secular. There is still an impression that religion is one thing and worldly pursuits another. Whereas, all life should be sanctified. To go to church Sunday and be in an hour religious for the whole week is foreign to the genius of our faith, and it is the fruitful source of those inconsistencies which are so disastrous to the confidence of the community. It is against the dividing

of what God has joined together I protest. Religion should dwell at the heart of the secular, and every hour and in every place render it beautiful with holiness.

When this lesson has been acquired, and when the thought of worship has been purged of the crudities we have noticed, then the truer and nobler idea becomes gloriously apparent. We then perceive that it is primarily spiritual affinity and spiritual correspondence, a gladsome going out of the soul to its Author, a constant movement toward Him, combined with a continuous self-conforming to His image, to His purity, His compassion, His love. In prayer we worship, for supplication is the manifestation of our passion for Godlikeness; in praise we worship, for adoration is our homage to what we desire to be, and to what the Supreme necessarily is; and we worship in all endeavors to abate the woe, degradation, and suffering of others, for by these means we come to show more and more the nature of the Deity. And only in proportion as divine services in churches are prolific in these results are they of any value to society or of any concern whatever to the Almighty.

Another essential of religion or worship remains to be considered: "TRUTH." In expounding this portion of our Lord's address we should take account of the probability that He was thinking of the symbolism that was so marked a feature of ancient faiths. It has been surmised that when He said on one occasion, "I am the true Vine," His eye rested on the golden image of a vine that ornamented the Temple, and that He meant by the term "true" to say, as in contrast with the artificial, that He was the real vine, from whose living stock the branches derived their soundness and beauty. So, by Jacob's well He announces the dethronement of symbolism. No longer will the Father tolerate bleeding victims, smoking altars, bedizened priests, and all the paraphernalia of religious formalism. "At the times of this ignorance He winked," but now demands the

real, the real sacrifice of the real Paschal Lamb, real praises instead of columned perfume from emblematic censer, the real conversion of human hearts instead of circumcisions' sign in the flesh, and real pilgrimages of mercy and genuine deeds of love instead of theatrical processions and dramatical genuflexions. The meaning of all this to our own times is that gorgeous ceremonialism as ceremonialism is not worship. Of course there may be worshiping souls where it is present, but the thing itself, however ornate, is not worship. It may be vanity, ostentation, the parade of human infirmities, pride, and ambition; and it may have a kind of usefulness in amusing the crowds and keeping them from debasing shows; but it is not worship. At the best, it displays too much of man's love of finery and spectacularism, and ministers too fully to the senses for it to aid devotion, in the spiritual import of that word. The real has come once and for all into the place of the artificial, the decorative, and the unveracious. No shams, no make-believe groans, no affectation of sanctity, no cant, no assumptions, or little conventional hypocrisies, — but a straight out and out manly godliness, full of gentle candor, and distinguished in every religious service by thorough genuineness. Such is the ideal of our Lord, and its realization calls for thoughtfulness, intelligence, as well as personal integrity and veracity.

It may be intimated that the preservation of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Church challenges the soundness of my interpretation of the word "true." This, however, depends on the actual import and purpose of the ordinances. Emanuel Kant writes on this point: "Baptism and the Lord's Supper may be looked upon as ethical observances for the public confession and quickening of the feelings of duty and brotherly love in a community; but to regard them as means of grace in the sense that by these ceremonies the Divine favor might be flattered and won would be heathenish superstition, and could only lead to contempt for virtue and the

greater influence of the priesthood as the dispensers of grace." I hold substantially this view, and believe that these acts are pictures, object-lessons, portraying the central verities of our faith, but are not "rites magical to sanctify." They are not channels by which mysterious grace is communicated to unregenerate souls, and ought not to be described as sacraments or by any other term that would lead the unwary to rely on them as in some way indispensable to salvation. The ordinances are symbols of instruction, and they are rather in their essential nature ethical and spiritual than ritualistic and ceremonial, — ethical, for they call for and express conscientious obedience; and spiritual, for they avow the reality of spiritual life already experienced by those who submit to their authority.

Let us never fail to make this distinction clear and complete; and let us never fail to realize that any so-called religious acts, undertaken without an intelligent purpose and without an intelligent apprehension of their purport, must come short of God's approval. When the Bible is read, not for the sake of the knowledge it is fitted to impart or for the inspiration to duty that arises from a sympathetic understanding of its teachings, but for the satisfaction of doing something presumably devout, the exercise is superstitious and hardly better than the mechanical counting of beads or repeating of *Pater Nosters*. Every sort of *Fetishism* is an abomination to the Almighty, whether it obtains among Protestants, Romanists, or Pagans. To keep Sunday as a solemn, somber species of asceticism, or to attend church as a kind of penance, under the impression that the perfunctory performance of these things must in some mysterious way be beneficial, is simply to incur the deserved rebuke uttered by Jesus at Jacob's well: "Ye know not what ye worship"; or if you know, you insult the eternal Intelligence by offering the "sacrifice of fools."

It must surely be evident to you, if enlightenment is of

such moment, that instruction ought to form part of "divine service," and that investigation must be a constant duty on the part of all men. Recalling the stress laid by the Savior on the word "know" in the context, and perceiving the indispensableness of knowledge, I am persuaded that that must be included in our definition of "truth" as an element of religion. Not only is truth as reality and veracity needful, but it is also requisite as doctrine or as the substance of faith. The clearer, deeper, profounder our comprehension of God and His ways, the spirit-condition being equal, the higher and nobler will be our homage. Jesus reproved the Pharisees, saying, "In vain do ye worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"; thereby declaring that error tends to vitiate this blessed service, and that teaching is part of it, and that truth is inseparable from its right performance. What degree of error is fatal to its acceptance it is not necessary to determine; as it is enough for us to feel the importance of being free from it altogether. It is for us to conclude that faithful preaching is an act of worship, and that earnest devout hearing is to be considered in the same light. The passion and enthusiasm to know more of the Father, the persevering, persistent inquiry after Him and His will, on the part either of pulpit or pew, is adoration of the purest and most exalted type, alike honoring to Him who receives it, and elevating to those by whom is tendered. And yet we hear much in our day of the pre-eminent value of heart-worship, and by some illogical souls the impression is made that the head has no part or call in the matter. It seems to be overlooked by these fervid exhorters that reason is as much a creation of God as the affections; and they know little of the relationship between them, or they would perceive that uncontrolled by the former the tribute of the latter is neither very flattering nor enduring; and they have certainly forgotten that the Bible commands us to praise God with the understanding as well as

with the spirit. It is to me most singular that we should boast our possession of a religion surcharged with thought, and that demands thought for its interpretation, and yet at times should be so suspicious and fearful of its exercise. Nevertheless such is the case. Not long since I heard a prominent clergyman preach on the theme "Reasonable Service," and yet he made a feeble apology for the most infantile use of our faculties in doing God's will. He seemed apprehensive that some one would accuse him of rationalism—a word that has been abused undoubtedly, but which to all of us ought to have a wholesome significance and indicate an obligation in connection with the Christianity we profess. I admit the possibility of perversion and danger in exercising thought, but no more than is possible in giving rein to feeling. The one may deceive, the other mislead; the one may blight as with frost, the other may scorch as with fire. I have known more persons seek in their emotions the meaning of God's Word than I have those who have looked to their inner consciousness for its interpretation; and I am sure the indulgence of sentimentality has caused more heretics than investigation has, and an effusive, gushing, non-enquiring piety has caused more presumption and arrogance than has generally followed the devout patient employment of the intellect. *Sapere aude!* "Dare to use thy own understanding," and use it in religion as well as in anything else. God made it, and you can exalt Him by consecrating it to His glory. Do not be afraid of His gift. If ever His name is to be set before thine own heart and the hearts of others in all its loveliness, reason must enter the arena, and exert its powers. And this most sacred work, whether done in the Church or at home, is unquestionably indispensable to the perfection of devotion, and is as indispensable to its completeness and grandeur as is the weeping homage of emotion.

The higher worship, then, is as flame composed of light and heat, as beauty combining perfect form with perfect

expression, and, in a word, may be briefly defined as intelligent thought of God winged by emotion to God. Where it is maintained in its greatest purity, there will be found the fairest homes, the sweetest manners, the holiest characters, the broadest sympathies, and the richest benefactions. While it is pleasing to God, it is certainly elevating to man. In return there comes to him a growing consciousness of his exalted origin and destiny, a deepening conviction of human brotherhood, and an increasing experience of spiritual delights, such indeed as shame the poor ecstasies of our mad world's revelry. The quaint, artistic Baptistery of Pisa is endowed with a most remarkable echo ; an echo that appears to be more than an echo. When the voice rises in humblest song, wafting even strident or imperfect notes, the sounds seem to have the power of converting the solid masonry into a many-piped organ, from whose melodious throat there issues in response a wealth of deep, sonorous, and impassioned harmony. We give a shout, and in return receive a dulcet jubilate ; we carol a solo, and receive a chorus ; we strike a lyre, and set an entire orchestra in motion ; we sing the long meter doxology, and are rewarded with a sublime and thrilling oratorio. What is this but an illustration of the wonderfully beneficent reaction of worship ? In Christianity there is one excelling and extraordinary Being, its Founder. Through the alembic of His mind all our thoughts transmuted ascend to the Father, and through the sweet-voiced instrument of His love all our praises pass, taking with them of the music of His own soul, into the presence chamber of the Almighty, where discord is never heard. And, oh ! marvel of grace, that which we have sent comes back to us, but not as it went, but as it was, when perfected and completed by the mediation of Jesus, accepted by the Father. We "bless the Lord" in exulting hallelujahs, and through Christ we receive blessedness in return : but our invocation is only a devout word ; the reciprocation is a most resplendent fact of

joy and gladness. In return for our poor song He gives us peace ; for our weak, meagre thought He bestows more ennobling thought ; for the paltry portion of worldly goods laid at His feet we are enriched with heavenly treasures, and for the surrender of ourselves He imparts Himself : more can He not give, and more, were there more, we could not welcome.

Glorious is worship — glorious as an experience, glorious as an institution — and glorious the privilege of speaking a word for it and of maintaining it in the earth. The privilege of speech has been mine in this sermon, and the privilege of upholding belongs to you who have heard as well as to myself. And as you turn aside from this study, let the many voices of praise that ascend to the throne of the Highest, whether emanating from nature or revelation, or from Christly sacrifice and saintly suffering, move you with all the melody of your soul to swell the everlasting anthem : —

“Glorious the northern lights astream ;
Glorious the song when God’s the theme ;
Glorious the thunder’s roar ;
Glorious hosannah from the den ;
Glorious the catholic amen ;
Glorious the martyr’s gore.

“Glorious — more glorious is the crown
Of Him that brought salvation down,
By meekness called Thy Son ;
Thou that stupendous truth believed,
And now the matchless deed’s achieved,
Determined, dared, and done.”

XI.

THEOLOGY OF JESUS.

The high priest then asked Jesus of His doctrine.—*John xviii, 19.*

SOON after the wedding at Cana Jesus went down to Capernaum, and, leaving His mother there, He returned southward that He might be present during the celebration of the Passover at Jerusalem. He must have found the streets of the holy city thronged with people from the provinces, who had come, like himself, to keep the feast, and who would naturally carry the tidings of anything He might say or do to all parts of the nation. The season, therefore, was opportune, and He improved it in such a way as to call the attention of rulers and citizens to His person and claims. He had displayed His power in Galilee; He now asserts His authority. This He does by expelling from the approaches to the temple the sordid traders who, in their thirst for gain, had converted the sacred place into a mart, and who would doubtless have used the heart of the sanctuary as a chamber of commerce if it could have been made to pay. Jesus evidently realized that neither persuasions nor appeals addressed to the degraded religious natures of such men would avail; and He consequently adopted a more violent and radical method. With whip in hand, He suddenly burst in upon the traffickers, overthrew their tables, and chased the mercenary crew into the streets, exclaiming as he did so, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise!" These extreme measures, coupled with His words, created a profound sensation, and led some among the Jews to inquire regard-

ing His right to do such things, and the answer which He gave — “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” — only deepened the impression, and, however interpreted, implied an assumption of authority beyond anything then known in Israel. This uncompromising boldness, justified by some miracles which followed, induced “many to believe on His name,” and influenced Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee, to seek from Him, under cover of night, a fuller account of His doctrine. In the obscurity of some modest room, or in some retired spot of the city, veiled from observation by the friendly darkness, the interview must have taken place; and there, under these circumstances, and with only a single listener, the greatest teacher that ever taught began His sublime work as preacher and prophet.

It is related of Socrates that he imparted instruction in no settled place — in no settled academy or school; but wherever he could find a pupil, in the market, in the street, in the gymnasium, or the workshop, he unfolded the principles of his philosophy. Jesus followed the same plan. While He availed himself of opportunities to speak in the synagogues of His country He was always free to implant the seeds of truth in any soil and at any time. By Jacob’s well, by the sea-side, on the mountain, in the plain, beneath the roof of a Pharisee or at the fireside of a friend, in the presence of a single hearer or in that of a multitude, He gladly communicated the knowledge which was destined to fill the world with light. In this respect He is our example. We, too, should have a word in season for all occasions. Not merely from the pulpit should we formally discourse on sacred themes; but in the home, in the counting-room, and on the highway should we look for fitting moments when we can talk familiarly on these momentous subjects. Were we to do so, possibly we should see the same interest awakened — the same in kind, if not in de-

gree — which attended both the public and private ministrations of Christ.

Wherever He spoke, the audience, small or great, was thrown into a ferment of excitement, and all sorts of people were strangely agitated. After His conversation with Nicodemus, He journeyed through Samaria on His way back to Galilee, and there, near the city of Sychar, He addressed first a woman and afterward a number of the citizens, with most marvelous results. Re-entering the abode of his youth, the much loved Nazareth, He preached to the people in the synagogue, applying Isaiah's prophecy regarding the anointed one to himself, and while He stirred up serious opposition, all who heard Him bore witness and "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Like amazement was expressed in Capernaum, whither He went after being expelled from Nazareth, and there the throngs who hung upon His lips were "astonished at His doctrine," and confessed "its power;" "for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the Scribes." Indeed, throughout His entire career, the expression of His thoughts seems to be more potent than the exercise of His almightiness. Communities are stirred by them; individuals are either maddened or enraptured by them; wisdom stands speechless before them, and ignorance opens its eyes at their sound. Miracles do not compare with them, either in the immediateness or the permanence of their effects. The Sermon on the Mount still makes a deeper and more enduring impression than the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, and the story of the Prodigal has been worth more to the world than the conversion of water into wine. The miracles of Christ seem to be less and less prized as the ages roll their weary round, and not unfrequently are unjustly denounced and depreciated, while his teachings seem to be more highly valued as the race advances in true knowl-

edge. The more we know, the more capable we are of appreciating their greatness and the more clearly we see that never within the same compass of words were ideas of equal grandeur and beauty proclaimed in the hearing of men. "Never man spake as this man." Plato, called the "son of Apollo," and Aristotle, termed the "master-mind of antiquity," were wonderful thinkers, and their philosophies have exerted a prodigious influence on metaphysical and scientific inquiry. The ideas of the first appear in the transcendentalism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Emerson; and those of the second reveal themselves in the empiricism of Bacon, Comte, Mill and Spencer. Around them distinctive and magnificent literatures have grown, and to their exposition various learned schools have been devoted. "But the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another." The intellectual throne of Christ towers above theirs. He who never sat in the shadow of the Porch, nor trod the groves of the Academy, has done more for thought and has been felt more deeply in thought than either of the names which have been mentioned, whom scholarly circles delight to honor. He has modified old philosophies and founded new ones; He has stimulated and directed investigations; He has imparted ideals to art and sentiment to poetry; he has allied reason and intelligence with religion; and, in a word, He has, from the days when He first taught in Nazareth of Galilee to the present, subdued ignorance, overcome mental torpor, and roused the spirit of research.

Considering the weight that his teachings had with all classes of people in Palestine, it is not surprising when Jesus stands as a prisoner before the high priest that that official should interrogate Him regarding his doctrines; and, in view of their subsequent prominence in the history of inquiry, it is not unnatural that we also should desire

to know something of their character. This desire has been felt in all times and by the most distinguished men; and it is cause for congratulation that means have been provided to satisfy its earnest questionings. Our Savior, like Socrates, wrote no books; but as we have in the writings of Plato reliable accounts of what that philosopher advocated, so we have in the New Testament authentic reports of our Lord's sayings and discourses. From this source, therefore, we can derive the information we seek. If we appeal to this witness, we shall be able to form a tolerably accurate conception of what He taught; and, as it is related to God and to the complex problems of religion, from the outset it may be regarded as His theology.

Now, it is to be observed in the first place that Christ's theology is not systematic. That is, He never undertook — what has been attempted with some success by his followers — to classify the truths He preached and to arrange them logically in their proper order. He gave us the flowers, but no botany; the stars, but no astronomy; the ocean, but no navigation. No amount of research will bring to light in the Gospels anything corresponding to the Institutes of Calvin or the Lectures of Leonard Wood. He does not begin with the idea of God, and then proceed to consider the fall and redemption of man; much less does He begin, as some have supposed, with simple ethical duties, and gradually rise to the mysteries of grace. As we have seen, his first recorded address proclaims the nature and necessity of regeneration and the love of God in giving His Son for man's redemption. These doctrines are fundamental to the Christian scheme, and yet He brings them to the attention of Nicodemus at once; and He speaks to the woman of Samaria about the "water of life" even before He delivers His sermon on the mount. Christ was no system-builder, though I mean by the re-

mark no disparagement of those who are. There is doubtless a place for systematic theology in religious culture, but He, at least, did not see fit to engage in its construction. The formal propositions, the array of evidence, the answers to objections, and the painful endeavors to harmonize discordant conceptions such as Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, which are too vast and bulky for mortal strength to handle, that enter largely into every theological treatise, were evidently not to His mind, and were very likely avoided as tending to impart to religion a dubious character, requiring subtleties of logic and tricks of rhetoric for its vindication. He preferred to speak freely, as the necessities of the hour demanded, with a view to the immediate end to be achieved and without regard to the exigencies of a system. In this respect, as in all others, He is the preacher's model, whose highest aim should be to adapt Christ's various teachings to the needs of his hearers, and not attempt a ponderous and regular course in divinity. That duty pertains to the Professor's chair more than to the pulpit, and from its faithful discharge students for the ministry unquestionably derive much advantage, in this respect, at least, if in no other, that they learn how difficult it is for speculative Davids to put together and wear the armor of the Almighty. The preacher preëminently is a sermon-maker, and to make a sermon is to fashion out of a text a garment that will fit the hearer; and the need for the sermon is, that every text is, like the giant's sleeve described by Lessing, ample enough to clothe a dwarf, but which, to be of real service to him, must be transformed from a sleeve into a coat.

Another peculiarity of Christ's theology is its transparency. It is said that Plato did not speak openly to all who sought instruction; that his doctrines were to the many esoteric, to be imparted only to the initiated, and that even to these favored few his meaning was not always

clear. Hegel is credited with the remark when alluding to his own writings: "Only one man ever understood me, and he did not understand me." And, to some extent, the same is true of the proud Athenian who wrote over his door: "Let no one enter who is unacquainted with geometry"; and possibly no one could enter in the sense of comprehending what was taught within. The Savior did not imitate the philosopher. There is no tortuosity of evasion in His speech, no kaleidoscopic changeableness in His language. He never intimates that any of His teachings have a double sense—one for the ignorant, another for the informed. Voltaire is credited with the saying: "Philosophy was never made for the people; the *canaille* of to-day resembles in everything the *canaille* of the last four thousand years. We have never cared to enlighten cobblers and maid-servants. That is the work of apostles," So much the worse for philosophy. But what the apostles did, Jesus did before them. What He taught He spoke for all; and it is a sign of His infinite wisdom that, while His ideas are worthy the attention of the profoundest thinkers, they can be understood by the most illiterate. A little child can be interested in His words, and can in some degree penetrate their meaning. That many of them declare mysteries is undeniable, but that which can be known of the mystery He does not express in obscure terms which only darken darkness. He candidly tells His disciples that there are truths which they cannot receive until after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but He does not restrict the promised revelation to a select and highly-cultivated few. Like the air, the light, the rain, and all the grandest manifestations of God in nature, His thoughts are the property of the many—of every human being, and every human being is encouraged to assert his right to the precious heritage. I am well aware that I am not voicing the ordinary and prevailing opinion on this sub-

ject outside of the church. Generally, it is supposed that Christ's doctrines are anything but clear, and that their indefiniteness is the principal cause of the controversies and sects which divide the Christian world. This, I am persuaded, is an unfair inference. The cause of the dissensions does not lie in the original teaching of the Master, but in the explanation of the disciples. They have undertaken, by commentaries, notes, and expositions, to render transparent what was never opaque, and the result is that in a large number of cases they have veiled the stars and eclipsed the sun. A peasant once said that he understood at a single reading the text of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and hoped, in the course of time, and with due application, to comprehend the explanatory notes of Dr. Scott. And many an earnest inquirer has been more perplexed by annotations on Scripture texts than by the texts themselves. I am also convinced that our systems of theology are measurably accountable for the divisions of Christendom. They frequently degenerate into an attempt to square the utterances of Jesus to the philosophy of Plato, or to the demands of some other metaphysical writer, and thus different speculative schools, claiming Jesus as an ally, involve Him in their rivalries, and make the impression on many minds that He is responsible for their discord. Theology sometimes is so involved, complicated, abstruse and vague, and so determined on the solution of problems which are unsolvable, that it confuses the intellect it would instruct, and alienates the heart it would reconcile. Were it less pretentious, and less philosophical, it would accomplish more good, and at least it would not foster the suspicion that Jesus is unintelligible to the common reader. When I turn from the turbid opacity of some ponderous divine to the simplicity of the Gospel, I cannot but think of what Cicero says of Cæsar's commentaries. Referring to the fact that these

records of his Gallic and British campaigns were merely designed by their author as memoranda to be used by regular historians, Cicero adds that their merit is such that discerning and judicious writers shrink from attempts to alter and amplify them. Possibly it might have been as well if similar discretion had been shown in dealing with the Gospel, and if similar respect had been paid to its manifest clearness.

It is also, I think, worthy of special notice that Christ's theology is far from being exclusive. Of late it has been pointed out, and that, too, in no very friendly spirit, that some of the radical ideas and some of the very phrases which are met with in the record of our Lord's ministry are contained in the writings of Buddhists, Brahmans, Greek and Roman philosophers, and Jewish Talmudists. It has, in consequence, been assumed that He, like other teachers, derived His wisdom from those who preceded Him, and only repeated what had been spoken before. Christians who are familiar with this subject know that there are such similarities, at times almost amounting to parallelisms, and yet they fail to see in this fact anything detrimental to His originality. Admitting that he was like Socrates, not only in His method of instruction, but in some few of the ethical ideas He inculcated; supposing that the human tendencies of Greek philosophy were incorporated into the very life of the Gospel; and conceding that He echoed moral sentiments which had found expression at the lips of Hindu and Hellenic sages, does it thence follow that He had nothing better, nothing higher, nothing newer to proclaim? Did He not impart to the world clearer conceptions of Divine Fatherhood? Did He not reveal the way of salvation? Did He not invest the hope of immortality with a fresh charm, and rest it upon surer foundations? And did He not carry out and perfect, round and complete, the partial truths which had been

anticipated by others? It is as absurd to question His originality on account of resemblance between a few of His ideas and those held in common by others, as it would be to suppose that Paul on Mars' Hill, in sight of the prison where Socrates comforted his disciples by discoursing on immortality, copied that great master, because his thoughts happened to run in distinctively religious channels.

The fact is, that Jesus recognized truth wherever taught, and was not so blind as to suppose that God had permitted four thousand years of history to pass without studding the dark firmament with some stars of light. Wherever the light dawned, though it was but as the break of day that heralds the sun, and though it could not color the flowers, or warm the earth, or do the work the sun does, He hailed it, and embraced it. He was not exclusive, narrow-minded, or prejudiced; neither was He more anxious to startle the world by novelties than to satisfy it by truth. Modern theology should borrow His spirit; preachers everywhere should cultivate it. Whatever is proven by science, whatever is discovered by investigation, should be gladly welcomed; and whatever is good, pure, and true, sanctioned by Pagan wisdom, should be appropriated; for it will be found that everything new and old, which accords with the reality of things, has a place in the Christian system, and is in harmony with its teachings. Neither should theologians hesitate to acknowledge their indebtedness to all sources, when all departments of knowledge are more indebted to Christ than His servants can be to them. De Quincey reproves Dr. Johnson for saying that, "to Homer, as its original author, may be traced back, at least in outline, every tale or every complication of incident now moving in modern poems, romances, or novels." This, as De Quincey thinks, is an extreme statement; but it is no exaggeration to say that, to Christ, as its source and inspiration, the world owes its present high position

in science and literature; and that, therefore, whatever benefit they in turn may have conferred, or may yet confer, on His cause, may, without prejudice to its greatness, be gladly and heartily recognized.

But, to come closer to the soul of my subject, the theology of Jesus is supernatural in its origin, evangelical in its character, and practical in its spirit. On the first point, nothing more is necessary than our Lord's testimony: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself;" "for I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me; He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak." That is, He claims to be governed in His preaching either by the fullness of the Godhead in Him or by the Divine wisdom influencing Him; and, on either supposition, His theology is not what is known as "natural," but is supernatural; is not the achievement of unaided reason, but the result of a Heavenly revelation. The other points demand ampler notice. Jesus undoubtedly was an ethical teacher; but themes other than pure morals, though related to them, engaged His attention. He made known the character of the Father, represented His providence as extending over the works of His hands as general in its scope and particular in its care; and He spoke of Himself as the Father's gift to the world, and as the brightest expression of His love. The Father, according to His conception, is a Being to be venerated, a Spirit to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. His view of man is singularly sad and solemn. While He referred to him continually as a creature in rank sufficiently exalted to entemple the Father and Himself in his soul (*John xiv, 23*), He described him also as degraded, lost, as the wayward sheep on the barren mountains, as the wretched prodigal starving in the midst of plenty, and self-exiled from the paternal home.

It is just here that Jesus makes Himself central to His

theology. He makes Himself the essence and substance, the foundation and superstructure, the source and the stream, the root and the flower, of the religion which He came to unfold and establish. Michelet recognized this peculiarity, while he criticised what it involves, and disdained what it implies. In his *Bible of Humanity* he writes: "But what to love? What to believe? About that there was no precise formula. To love the teacher, and to believe on the teacher. To take His very person, a living creed, for a symbol and a creed. This is the very accurate meaning of all that St. Paul has written, and which has been marvelously well stated in this sentence, 'Jesus taught nothing but Himself.'" The sentence quoted is from Renan; and it is singular that these brilliant French infidels should so clearly discern what so many sectaries have frequently overlooked, namely, that Christianity is in reality merged in its Author, is the shadow of His presence, and the aureole of His glory. In harmony with this view, Jesus assumes that no man can come to the Father but through Him; that whosoever believeth on Him hath everlasting life; and that without Him no man can do anything. He claims to be not only the light of the world, but its life, and carries the latter thought so far as to say, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (*John vi, 26-40*). The same great doctrine is alluded to in those passages where He speaks of laying down His life for the sheep, and where, in the institution of the Supper, He exclaims, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood which is shed for you"—"for the remission of sin." In no stronger terms than these could the fundamental dogma

of the evangelical faith be affirmed. As that faith sets forth, so He evidently held Himself to be Mediator, Priest and Atonement; the Being through whom redemption is wrought, and by whom spiritual justification and final glory comes to the race. Thus the apostles understood Him, and hence they constantly present Him as the life and soul of the religion which is called by His name. They speak of Him as the "Author and Finisher of the Faith," as the "Head over all things to the Church," and as the Being in whom all things are "to be gathered together, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth." They declare that "the Church is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all," "in whom," to change the figure, "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." He dwells in His disciples, and they are "complete in Him." They "grow up into Him in all things," and they "learn Him" as well as of Him, and they are "His members," as it were "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh." Paul exclaims, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"; and John writes, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Conversion is an ingrafting into Christ; Baptism is the putting on of Christ; the Supper is the appropriation of Christ's flesh and blood; and Perfection is "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Thus the immediate followers of our Lord regarded Him as the totality, the wholeness, the entirety of the truth He came to proclaim, and of the system He came to inaugurate. Hence Luthardt says, "He makes Himself the central point of His every announcement. 'It is I' is the great text of all His teaching. 'If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins,' is, in fact, a saying in which His whole doctrine may be summed up."

While in this respect His theology is widely separated from the philosophies and creeds of other religions, it is likewise preëminently practical. Indeed, there is little that is speculative about it, for it does not enter into the bewildering mazes of the questions it propounds and the doctrines it declares. These are always directly related to the moral quickening and moral guidance of the people, and they are apparently only so far discussed as will promote these objects. He keeps before the world a magnificent ideal of what humanity should be, and the doctrines of grace are simple revelations of the forces that are available for its actualization. Matthew Arnold says, "Religion is morality touched by emotion"; but he does not tell us what is to touch the emotions. Christ assigns that task to the reality of God's love, and to the power of His own self-sacrifice. And as the means are stupendously great, so the ideal is resplendently glorious. It surpasses in ethical purity and beauty every other conception of personal goodness and rectitude. Plato's morals, though commending prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, are infinitely at fault when dealing with marriage, and ignore those passive virtues which distinguish the Sermon on the Mount. The system of laws given by Solon he himself admitted could be improved, but claimed that it was adapted to the people. That is, he did not seek to bring them up to a standard higher than themselves; just as Plato acknowledged that the object of his Republic was not to lift the human creature up from degradation, but to assist him to find his proper level, and to settle him in the place for which his natural qualities fitted him, so Solon accommodated himself to man, and only attempted to regulate his baseness. Jesus differs in aim and method from them all. He sets before man the perfection which it is possible to reach, thus stimulating his noblest ambition, and reveals the means by which it is to be achieved;

and thus moves him onward and upward to the goal where the fadeless crown of righteousness rewards the victor.

As we should imitate Jesus in all things, our theology, like His, should be practical. I fear we are altogether too speculative. Much of our preaching seems very much like an aimless excursion to dream-land. We go we know not where, and apparently we know not why. The old dogmatic tone has almost entirely ceased, and instead we hear "maybes," and "probabilities" and "hypotheses." Much talk is frequent on the philosophy of religion, and not a little about new theology, and the impression is being made that ministers have a very small amount indeed of positive and definite truth to communicate. Never before were words so lavishly multiplied with so little knowledge, and never was knowledge so darkened by words as at present. When sifted and carefully examined, the opinions now set forth as novelties, and as improvements on the accepted faith, are merely antique heresies revived, theories held in ages past which have been resuscitated and reclothed. Progress in this field there has been none; there has only been a revolution of the wheel of thought, which has once more brought discarded views of Scripture to the top. The so-called advanced thought is not that of an engine's wheel, which carries it forward, but that of the windmill, which turns without advancing. Better would it be for the world if its religious teachers would pay more attention to the application of theology than to its improvement. What is needed is more Baconianism in our pulpits. The father of modern science broke with the ancients, not merely in method, but in aim. He taught, what they would have regarded with contempt, that knowledge should be rendered practical. Hence he inaugurated an age of utilitarianism in which discovery is valued by its beneficial effect upon the people. So should we measure the worth of sermons. They ought to touch the life, to

refine, elevate and save. In this direction there is ample room for genius, originality, and for all gifts and graces that may be consecrated to God's service. And when students of theology shall more fully realize this, and shall seek to make theology available to man's varying necessities, then shall it come to be honored as it deserves.

The world's greatest teacher has passed into the Heavens, but His words abide, and abide they shall forever. Inestimable was the privilege of hearing Him. This, however, was granted to a few comparatively. But His voice has sounded sweetly through the ages, and never can be silenced. To day it rises above the noise of stormy debate and tenderly repeats its messages of grace and love. These messages are your inheritance. Ah! how you should thank God for the opportunity you enjoy of knowing His mind on the most momentous of all themes! Christ said to His disciples: "Many prophets and kings desired to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And well they might, for they are the hinge on which turns the destiny of the soul. You also hear them, then prize them. "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." Especially cleave to her; for, if despised, her ministry to thee hath an end. Recall the Lord's final visit to Nazareth, and be warned. Once rejected, He went again, anxious to bless; but the people received Him not. Sadly He turned away forever from the home of His youth, as He will turn from thee if thou shalt continue obdurate, and His voice never more be heard in thy habitations. Never more? Did I say never more? No, He will not be eternally dumb. Again he shall speak, exclaiming: "Depart, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew ye." And then He will leave thee to silence unbroken, and it may be to silence endless.

XII.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them.— *Matthew xiii, 34.*

PANTOMIME came before language, hieroglyphics before letters, pictures before books, and the drama before philosophy. Expressive gesture, poetic imagery, figures of speech growing into personification, fable and allegory, not only preceded literal discourse and abstract reasoning, but have always surpassed them as vehicles of instruction. When the senses are appealed to, when the imagination is enlisted, when the emotions are stirred, the impression is more instantaneous, vivid, and enduring than can possibly be created by means distinctively recondite and abstruse.

The drama is narrative in action. It is that form of composition that represents the personages of the story as living and doing, that reveals their thoughts in words, and their characters in deeds. It occupies a prominent position in the literature of all cultivated nations, and seems to have been originally designed, not exclusively for amusement, but to produce immediate social, religious, or political results. This assumption is abundantly sustained alike by the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and the comedies of Aristophanes and Menander. In the former we find repeated political allusions; endeavors to restrain advancing radicalism as in Æschylus; and efforts to foster freedom, as in Sophocles; and in the latter pictures of the foibles, manners, passions of the times, as in

Aristophanes. It should likewise be borne in mind as confirming the view suggested that the drama in the earlier stages of its history was intimately associated with the great festivals held in honor of the gods. Among the Hindus its origin is ascribed to an inspired sage, Bharata, and it deals with incidents in the marvelous career of Vishnu, and at the beginning was dedicated to the glory of Indra. In Greece also it was closely allied to the national religion. The people of that country celebrated the worship of Dionysius, received from the Phoenicians, by the performance of comical and tragical plays. This pleasurable service was paid for out of the public treasury, was governed by public officials, and was countenanced by the wisest citizens of the Commonwealth — facts which not only lent dignity to these performances, but which now go to show that they were regarded as eminently practical in their effects. A similar inference is warranted by what is known of the rise and progress of the drama in England. It first appeared there under the name of Mysteries, then as Moralities, and afterward as Interludes. The Mysteries were exhibitions, more or less complete, of leading events in the ministry of Christ; the Moralities were representations of an ethical character, while the Interludes were decidedly humorous and farcical. These various entertainments were under the patronage of the Church, were given at times in religious houses, and were highly esteemed by pious and devoted people. Ultimately, however, the drama divorced itself, or was divorced, from the Church, and the modern theater came into existence. Since then it has been thoroughly secularized, and its repeated degradation has given rise to many vexed questions concerning its influence; but its early alliance with sacred institutions indicates that, in the judgment of antiquity, it was neither necessarily profane nor pernicious, but was fitted to awaken religious emotion,

kindle holy enthusiasm, and reveal to the poorest understanding the deepest and most gracious of truths.

This undeniable adaptation of dramatic composition to the purest and noblest interests of humanity explains why it is found to a considerable extent in the inspired Scriptures. That it is there, and there in abundance, all competent critics allow. Of course, their pages will be searched in vain for anything corresponding to a regular play. But, while there are no portions of the sacred writings that can be regarded as dramas in the strict sense of the term, there are several, indeed many, passages which are essentially dramatic in form; narratives, for instance, where the action, as in the Book of Job, passes before the eye of the reader, and revelations, where the events and the personages connected with them, as in the giving of the Decalogue, are so vividly described as to seem like present realities. Our meaning is illustrated by the Homeric poems, where, without attempting to imitate the play in structure, the plot is unfolded and carried out by heroes who breathe and move, and perform their mighty deeds as on the mimic stage. The "Masque of Comus" and the "Samson Agonistes" of Milton are more perfectly modeled on the pattern of ancient tragedy, than the epic of Homer, but in many of their characteristics they are not far removed from what we discover in the Old Testament. They differ in several respects from the tragedies of Shakspeare, and from the Faust of Göethe, and ought rather to be classed with dramatical poems than with dramas. From these sources, therefore, may be gathered an adequate idea of what is termed the dramatic element in the Bible.

A sublime instance of what is meant, Moses furnishes in the first chapter of Genesis. There we have an account of creation, not given scientifically or philosophically, but dramatically. The description is neither Hegelian nor Darwinian, but Miltonian. Jehovah is there represented

as doing. He is the infinite actor—using that term in its original and unobjectionable sense—the emptiness of space is His theater; angelic orders, “the sons of God that shouted for joy”—are the spectators. The curtain rises and falls six times, each time on a different scene, but all converging in one grand consummation—the creation of man. Then begins a seventh act, whose course is marked by sin and sorrow, blood and battle, despair and death, and on which the curtain of eternity shall fall at last amidst the rejoicing of a universe redeemed. Other and less magnificent, though hardly less striking, examples of this principle are furnished in the annals of Israel. How full of startling situations, thrilling movements, absorbing and exciting plots and counterplots, remarkable deliverances and tragical episodes is the career of the Lawgiver, and how pathetic and picturesque its close. The history of Joseph is also thoroughly dramatic. We behold him in the simplicity of youth, exciting the enmity of his brothers by unskillful babblings; we behold him betrayed by their hate into the hands of the slave-dealers, and unsuccessfully tempted and unjustly imprisoned in the land of captivity; and we behold him steadily rising by the force of native integrity to dominion and power, and, having rescued his unnatural relatives from the peril of famine, we see him gently and quietly falling to sleep, honored by all and favored by God. As we read the story of this life it is, as it were, reënacted before us, and we derive from it stimulus to manly uprightness, which the colorless abstractions of ethical philosophy could never impart. Another illustration we have in the deeds of Elijah. Suddenly he bursts from the mountains of Gilead on a profligate scene, like the tempest that sweeps from the hills on the plains, and, like the tempest, he prostrates before him the rotten and weak. Alone he suddenly confronts a base king in his pride, answers his frown by a marvel of power, shuts up

the womb of the rain and scorches the earth, and scatters in fear the foes of Jehovah. Alone he encounters the prophets of Baal, bids them call on their god, who, if he exist, will answer by fire, while he in his turn, will lift up his solitary cry to the Being he serves, and who, he believes, will not be deaf to his humble petition. No transaction on record can be more dramatical than this, and none that we know of produced such momentous results. The fire descends. Jehovah is vindicated; the people convinced. And at the end of his work, when other labors were done, he who appeared so unexpectedly among men on the earth, is as abruptly translated to the fellowship of angels in Heaven. Such examples as these could indefinitely be multiplied, and we might easily point out magnificent personifications in which Nature seems gifted with thought and emotion, and anxious through the mighty circle of her works and with all her voices to magnify God; and we might dwell on that liturgy which demanded a priesthood gorgeously robed, and sacrifices offered with sacred solemnity, and which was but a shadow of good things to come, a rule for representations, as on a stage, of mysteries divine. But what we have said must suffice, and, if allied to that at which we have only ventured to glance, will more than suffice to illustrate in what sense the Scriptures are dramatical, and may serve to account for the prominence of this element in the preaching of Christ.

Familiar as He was with the Holy Oracles which had been committed by Providence to His fathers, it would have been singular if His manner of teaching had failed to be colored by their style. Such was not the case. It is said in the text that He spoke to the multitudes in parables, and that at that time He spoke in no other way. The parable is an amplified simile—an extended comparison. From the fable it differs in this, that it never intro-

duces brute or inanimate creatures as gifted with human feelings and attributes, or sets them forth as reasoning, acting and talking like men. Its figures move in harmony with the laws of their being, and its action is likewise consistently faithful to Nature, whatever its scope or its aim. Sometimes, by the conduct of persons in one sphere, truths that lie in another and higher are evolved and made clear, as in the toil of the Sower and the love of the Shepherd; and sometimes by the courses of men simply the wisdom to be desired and the folly to be dreaded, the meekness to be fostered and the pride to be abased are vividly pictured, as in the career of Dives, the millionaire, and in the prayer of the publican. The parables, therefore, may be divided into two general classes — the first symbolical, the second mimetical; the one illuminative, the other imitative; the one relating mainly to doctrine, the other particularly to practice; but both are dramatic in form, and may be regarded as dramas in miniature — as dramas abridged and condensed.

Take the Prodigal's story as a specimen of this last characteristic. The Savior discloses to view a prosperous Jewish household, where the father is kind and the sons are indulged. In early manhood the younger grows weary of home, and desires to try the great world, to encounter its perils, to taste of its pleasures. Heedless of the pain he inflicts, he bids adieu to the scenes of his childhood and, fortune in hand, wanders in distant lands, and mingles with peoples alien and strange. Unshielded by domestic influences, unrestrained by the presence of friends, he falls a prey to his own wild fancies and passions, and squanders his substance in riotous living. We see him heated with wine, carousing with spendthrifts, feasting with harlots, and wasting his strength and disgracing his name. But the day of retribution comes. A famine sweeps over the country. The storm fiercely breaks loose,

and every ship has to take care of itself. The Prodigal finds himself without the means needful to make the shore. No one will help him. He is abandoned and desolate, and in the depth of his want he who was the companion of the rich and the gay becomes the keeper of swine. How startling the contrast! A little while before he was clothed with silken bravery, but now he has scarcely rags enough to cover his emaciated form; and not long since he was housed in a palace, flattered by parasites, and banqueted on delicate viands, but now he is abiding with pigs, ministering to pigs and eating their food. To such foul and degrading consequences do our pleasant vices lead! But there is hope for the Prodigal. He comes to himself. Memory restores the image of home, while conscience regaining her throne, leads to reform, and both, kindling anew the dying embers of hope, awaken righteous resolve. He returns to his father. Hungry, naked, foot-sore, self-condemned and abased, he approaches the home of his youth, and then, when the suspense has become unendurable, he feels loving arms around him, warm kisses of love on his cheek, and, looking up, beholds the dear, familiar face of his sire. All is forgotten, all forgiven; the festival music gladdens all hearts, and though the discord of a brother's selfish complaint jars the ear for a moment, we instinctively think, as the Master Teacher designed us to think, that, if an earthly parent can receive the penitent Prodigal, surely the Heavenly Father will also receive the repentant transgressor. Now I hold that this parable is essentially dramatic. It could easily be separated into acts and scenes; it possesses the unity of plan from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added without mutilating the whole; and it instructs by example, and that with so much pathos and power that we are held captive by its charm, and borne irresistibly onward to the moral it inculcates. As much,

and even more, may be said of that wonderful word-painting in which the conditions of the haughty rich and the worthy poor are contrasted. Dives and Lazarus are men differing widely in earthly estate, and differing yet further in their relative destinies. From the inequalities of time we are carried to the righteous awards of eternity; and there a scene is unfolded to sight which may fitly have served grave Dante, the poet, as awful outlines for his visions of Hell. It lies before us in gigantic sublimity, and its solemn sorrow sweeps over our soul with all the annihilating, overpowering influence of unmitigated austerity. We are horrified at the doom; we tremble before the inflexible justice that decrees it; we realize our peril, and hasten to Him in whose grace a refuge is found, and whose blood not only quenches the penal fires, but washes us clean from the moral defilement that excludes us from Heaven. Here is a tragedy, condensed it is true, but the brevity adds to its force; and a tragedy that stirs the emotions, purifies thought, and awakens lofty desire.

There are other parables, such as "The Priceless Pearl," "The Two Debtors," "The Merciless Servant," "The Good Samaritan," "The Rich Fool," "The Unjust Steward," "The Marriage Feast," "The Virgins," and many more, of which I cannot now speak in particular, but the number of which indicates how largely our Lord relied on the dramatic element in dealing with men, while their range and their treatment reveal His fathomless knowledge of all that pertains to humanity. Schlegel reminds his readers that "Göethe has ingeniously compared Shakspeare's characters to watches with crystalline plates and cases, which, while they point out the hours as correctly as other watches, enable us at the same time to perceive the inward springs whereby all this is accomplished." And Lessing, referring to the same great writer, has said: "He gives a lively picture of all the most minute and

secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls; of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains; of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions." With even more propriety may these representations be applied to our Lord. His parables lay bare the soul, strip it of its complicated disguises, and reveal it to itself as it is in all ages, and under all circumstances. The characters they portray are transparent, the heart that beats behind their movements is disclosed, and there is nothing hidden that is not brought to light. They hold "the mirror up to nature," and in it we see ourselves, and, seeing there our image, we follow with unabated interest every detail, that we may understand our duty and apprehend our destiny.

This, however, is not all. The dramatic features of our Lord's preaching end not here. There is another kind of parable, which thus far we have not noticed, and which, for the sake of clearness, I shall define "the parable of manner." The look, the attitude, the gesture, the tone of voice, and even the peculiar grouping of words are related to a man's thought, or should be, as the language-parable is to the idea it conveys. Dean Trench claims that the incarnation, "inasmuch as it was a making intelligible of the otherwise unintelligible, a making visible the invisible," was "the highest and most glorious of all parables;" and similarly, as the outward manner of our Lord expresses His innermost life, and, being sensuous, enables us to perceive more clearly the supersensuous, it may justly be regarded in the same light. It manifests, pictures to the eye what is passing within, and interprets to the mind the deep significance of the spoken discourse. The value of manner can hardly be estimated. Sometimes the glance of the eye, or the sweep of the arm, or the turn of the head, or the emphasis of a word, or the modulation of

voice will add force to a sentence, will often rescue it from obscurity, and bring out its latent beauties as by magical power. This parable of manner is necessarily dramatic, just as the parable of language is, because it is teaching by action, meaning by action what the Roman orator did when he identified it with eloquence — namely, expression: it is rightly called dramatic, because it appeals to the senses, dresses thought in garments appropriate, and marshals ideas, not like an army of intangible phantoms, but like a host, living and breathing, and ready for war.

Among the masters of this art may be mentioned such speakers as Demosthenes, Chrysostom, and Beecher; but Jesus of Nazareth excelled them all. When He taught, voice, bearing, gesture, all combined to lend grace, dignity and force to His words. When He addressed God, the uplifted eyes added impressiveness to His prayer; and when He delivered the sermon, known to us as the Sermon on the Mount, according to Luke's account, the same motion of His eyes must greatly have enhanced its solemnity. At the time of His betrayal, He did not turn on His faithful servant Peter with rebukes; He merely looked on him, but there was so much concentrated in that look, so much of pity and of gentle, forgiving reproof, that Peter went away and wept bitterly. On the last day of the feast, it is said, "Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Picture Him suddenly pausing in the midst of the crowd and elevating His voice that all might hear, and imagine the startling effect His words must have produced. Surely had His manner been less dramatic His words had been less powerful. The scene in the synagogue of Nazareth is also worthy of mention. Having read the prophecy relating to Himself, He closed the book and handed it to the minister and sat down. His conduct drew to Him all eyes, and a hush of expectation followed; and then, having secured the attention of

His countrymen, He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." The effect, judged by what followed, must have been electrical. If you recall His visit to Jerusalem immediately after His temptation you will remember that His announcement of His dignity and authority was not expressed first in discourse, but in action. He drove the money-changers out of the temple, and vindicated His right to do so afterward in language. His whole bearing on this occasion was intensely dramatic, as it was when He withered the fig-tree, and as it was when He partook, with His disciples, of the Last Supper. In that upper chamber, when the feast was spread, when the symbols were present which proclaimed the self-sacrificing love of the Master, and the storm-clouds were gathering that soon were to burst over His devoted head—what could be more strikingly pathetic than His prediction, "One of you shall betray me?" Like King Lear in the pitiless tempest, vainly knocking at the doors of his daughters for shelter, and closing the fearful record of his woes with the words, "I have given you all;" Jesus, holding in His hand the emblems that said louder than speech, "I have given you all," when He adds, "One shall betray me and all shall be offended because of me," seems to lament that the hearts He had enriched should be closed against Him in His hour of extremity. No picture could be more highly wrought than this, and its interest lies as much in what is done as in what is said. The entire scene is a transactional parable, which tragically unfolds the graciousness of Christ and the ingratitude of man. When the Spartan mother laconically said to her sons, as they went forth to battle, "This, or on this," it was the gesture directed toward the shield and the significant tones of her voice that explained her meaning. When Themistocles stood before the uplifted staff of Eurybiades and cried, "Strike, but hear," it was his bear-

ing, his look, his countenance, more than his famous answer, that averted the blow and saved Salamis. And thus throughout the ministry of Jesus, His manner threw light on His teachings, helped powerfully to change the current of human thought and conduct, and, with the aid of His spoken parables, transformed what would otherwise have been cold, colorless abstractions into "thoughts that breathe and into words that burn."

From this example we should learn to cherish the dramatical element in religious instruction. As Robert Hall is reported to have recommended, we should have "likes" in our sermons, many comparisons, illustrations and such parables as we can fashion, if we can fashion them at all. Concerning the latter the following characteristic story is related of two eminent men of Kentucky who were on terms of closest intimacy. Rev. Robert Breckenridge is said to have asked the celebrated Hon. Thomas Marshall why he never came to hear him preach. The answer he received was, "When you preach in parables as did your Master I will attend and listen." The good divine explained the difficulties in the way of following the suggestion, but was told by the witty lawyer in reply, that he would compose a parable for him, if he would preach it. The doctor consented, and they parted. Months passed away, and when they met again the preacher reminded the statesman of his promise. "Well," said Thomas Marshall, "I have not forgotten it, and to tell you the truth, Robert, I have given no small amount of time and labor to the production of a parable. I secluded myself, tried faithfully day and night, and at last abandoned the attempt convinced that only one man ever spoke in parables, and He, you know, 'spake as never man spake.'" This is a beautiful tribute to the sacred genius of our Lord, as deserved as it was unexpected from that source. But though it may not be easy to speak in

parables, and though those of our Savior must forever stand by themselves unapproachable in excellence as His person was in purity, nevertheless we can by diligent study to some extent at least imitate His example and in some degree pattern the manner of our teachings after His, even as we try to shape our conduct by His life. That we instinctively turn to the dramatical in some form is seen on many sides. The Sunday-school adopts pictures, and blackboards on which may be drawn to the eye what the mind should believe, and constructs fables, and recites stories which may assist the young to an understanding of the inspired text. All this is legitimate. Some ministers are preaching with pictures in chalk to illustrate their thought, and most of them seek, however many may miss the object, to express fairly and graphically, in manner and action, the emotions they feel and the convictions they hold. Those who fail at times are inclined to reflect severely on those who succeed, describing their style as "sensational," a term which is supposed to denote meretriciousness, but which in reality describes the quality that should distinguish each sermon, a power to agitate men out of moral apathy, and rouse them to a sense of personal duty. Sad is it that some teachers should take merit to themselves for their failures, and that they should pelt with ill-natured remarks those who succeed. But their criticisms ought not to influence us in any way to disparage what Jesus has sanctioned, and what such preachers as Chrysostom, Whitfield and Edwards employed with marvelous power.

A warning is likewise conveyed by our theme. If the dramatical element is so potent for good, surely if debased and perverted it must be potent for ill. Here lies the secret of the antagonism which thoughtful people have felt and still feel toward the theater. There the dramatic is divorced from its mission, and, to an extent appallingly

great, panders to lust and seduces to crime. Vice on the streets in undisguised filthiness or holding its unblushing orgies in the halls of the procuress does not compare with the stage when surrendered to shame, in power to corrupt and in wiles to destroy. On its boards even villainy is invested with charms, and its portraits of debauchery attract infinitely more than they repel. You who love the theater for what it might be, remember we condemn it only for what it is. For the sake of humanity, we heartily pray that it may be redeemed, and heartily thank all, whether connected with it or not, who in practical ways are seeking its redemption. Save it, if possible. Rescue the drama, which, like Samson in bonds, is abused as a slave, when it might rule as a king. But bear in mind that its power in these times is so generally regarded as perniciously terrible, that the Church, fearing God and loving man, dare not — aye, dare not — smile approvingly, or in anywise countenance its insidious attacks on the moral order of society. That it is thus arrayed against the highest interests of community its daily annals prove. Take in support of this statement the following article published recently in the columns of a leading Chicago daily paper: “The low tone of morals among a class of actresses is one of the alarming social symptoms of our day. If it has always been so, it was never before so flaunted in the face of the public as it now is. I don’t undertake to give moral lessons in these letters, but there are some things that are so offensive that it seems to me no writer for the press should fail to take note of them. A conspicuous one of them is the number of husbands that actresses are allowed to have and still be employed in respectable theaters; and the number of followers that publicly attend those who are without husbands altogether. Single women are shy of being old maids everywhere except on the stage. Here they seem to take pride in it,

and don't even assume their husband's name when it is one to which they are faithful. But the way those who are married transfer themselves from one husband to another, is the most appalling feature of the case from a moral point of view, and leads one to believe that the stage recognizes little of permanence, if it does anything of sanctity, in the marriage relation. The worst that the pulpit says of the stage is justified by what we hear constantly in this way. The objectionable manners and bearing of actresses in public is another point that should not escape attention. A lady tells me that she saw a popular actress from New York recently, dressed in a manner that would attract attention anywhere, go into Parker's dining room in company with one of the other sex. They called for two bottles of champagne, one after the other. Her companion left soon after, and she was then joined by a person of her own sex. They immediately called for a third bottle, which they drank, and were apparently getting ready for a fourth when this lady left the dining room. She said she had a curiosity to see how the actress could get out of it, but she could not wait. Yet this was a young girl but a year or two out of her teens, who was beginning thus early to lead a life, the character of which may be estimated from this public display." Moreover, as though such scandalous scenes were not enough to brand the theater with infamy, the very posters on the wall of town and city giving an idea of its performances, placard its Satanic character. From them, as well as from dramatic criticisms we gather that intellectually it is weak, and that ethically it is monstrous. It caters to the basest appetites and passions of the public, considers not the moral murders it nightly commits, and has no regard even for the welfare of its unhappy employés. These latter are forced to toil Sunday as well as on week days, they earn a precarious living, and are driven frequently by excitement and disap-

pointment to drunkenness and despair. Yet it is insolently assumed that the Church should patronize the stage—that the bride of Christ should hold fellowship with a harlot. Such union is impossible. I do not say that she should indiscriminately denounce all actors—for among them are many worthy people, and they are entitled to consideration and respect; neither do I say that it is a sin for Christians at times to visit the theater to witness an unobjectionable play; but I do insist that the theater as an institution has so far gone over to corruption that it is better not to seem even to approve it, and that it is the duty of the Church, so long as this neighbor of hers preserves his present defiance of moral decency, to reprove and not condone his evil ways. She must stand aloof, helping her neighbor, if he permits, to a better life, but never seeming to sanction the evil courses into which he has fallen. If we are told that Schiller extols the magnanimity of Augustus in offering the forgiving hand to the conspirator Cinna, saying: “Let us be friends, Cinna,” we can only reply, when our Cinna, the stage, shall purge itself of treason against the welfare of humanity, shall plot no more against its Sabbath and its purity, and shall really espouse its sacred cause, Augustus will gladly extend the fraternal hand—the Church will cheerfully say, “Let us be friends, Cinna:” yea, and friends they will be, for they who in common seek the good of mankind can never be foes.

XIII.

THE PROPHECIES OF JESUS.

This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth.—*Matt. xxi, 11.*

IN a very important sense, prophecy has been superseded by history. The more we know in a natural way of the past, the less necessity there is of knowing anything supernaturally of the future. To the childhood of the world, when models of nobility and greatness were wanting, when neither pharos nor beacon had been devised, when everything had to be learned by experience, and when it was impossible either to anticipate the direction of human progress or the events with which advancing time was pregnant, prophecy must have been of inestimable value. It must have scattered some of the shadows lying dense and dark on the ages to come, must have brought at least their vague outlines into view, must have made obscurely clear the path which the feet of unborn millions would wearily tread, and must have helped primeval man to understand, by what inevitably would be, what he in his character and conduct should be.

The predictions which the most venerable of books record, and of which we find counterparts in the most sacred traditions of all nations, and which seem to antedate all others, foreshowing the sufferings of the race and the advent of a Redeemer—"the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head"—could not but exert a decisive and molding influence on the fortunes and destinies of mankind. The annals of all peoples justify this supposition. We find them replete with evidence that

these predictions colored thought, shaped religions, and determined in a high degree the course of things, even as the promises made to Abraham affected the movements and the lives of his descendants. But the service thus rendered by prophecy is now more effectively performed by history. The latter has supplanted the former as a teacher, and its lessons are clearer and less mysterious. We see to-morrow in to-day, because we have read the record of yesterday. We behold the veil torn from human nature and its deepest secrets laid bare to the vulgar eye by the wars of passion and the conflicts of thought which have agitated the centuries. History shows to the eye an image of the pangs which the race has endured, reveals the sad scenes through which it has passed, and echoes the footfalls of its struggling and dying generations. It flashes a torch through the darkness of years on which the sun has forever gone down, and brings into the light the shadows of the dead to direct and instruct the living. Consequently, attention is more steadfastly fixed on what has been than on what is to be; and though at times curiosity bends with hungry look over the abyss of the unknown, still the past of the world, more than its future, is appealed to with confidence for guidance and help.

This measurably explains why prophecy ceased as history advanced, and why its last outburst distinguished the age of Christ, and His apostles. Through a previous period, from the days of Malachi to the days of John, it had been suspended, partly on account of transgression, but mainly because sufficient light had been given to serve all practical purposes until the appearance of the Messiah. After He had wrought His mighty work among men, and had foreshadowed many things that should come upon the earth, it was natural, especially as the race was sufficiently cultured to write history and to appreciate its uses, that the prophetic office should end.

This position, however, only holds good in regard to one of its functions—that one which thus far we have had exclusively in view, and with which this discourse proposes to deal. It should not be forgotten that the names which describe the prophets of God are significant of something more than the power of foreseeing the future. Indeed, some of their order were apparently unendowed with this gift. They were primarily men inspired to make known the thought of Jehovah. By their mouth came the messages, whether of promise or warning, and whether related to former or subsequent times, which God in his mercy saw fit to communicate. Among the Greeks they were regarded as interpreters, as the men appointed to articulate the will of the gods; and among the Jews they were likewise revered as the earthly voices of Heaven. A prophet in Israel was a man, and sometimes a woman, divinely prepared to speak of invisible things, to urge on the people their duty, to lead in moral reforms, and to reprove and rebuke the transgressors. In these respects this sacred office is perpetual. It has passed over to the ministers of the Gospel, who, though they are not directly inspired, are anointed to proclaim the truths of the Bible, and to apply them in such a way as the needs of the hour may demand. But its other and more mysterious function has not been transmitted. We have no valid grounds for believing that preachers or astrologers, seventh sons or seventh daughters, are now inspired to prophecy, or that any person can in anywise presage the future, save as natural sagacity and an intimate acquaintance with human affairs may qualify to do so.

When Jesus of Nazareth went up and down the dusty roads of Palestine, taught on the wayside, and healed in the streets, the multitudes glorified God, and exclaimed, "A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people." When He triumphantly entered

Jerusalem, and when the cry ascended, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," in answer to the question propounded by the agitated city, "Who is this?" it was said, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth." And though some of the Pharisees, forgetting the declaration of Isaiah, that the people of Galilee should see a great light, and forgetting that Jonah, Nahum, and Hosea were from that despised province, denied the possibility of a prophet arising in Galilee; yet such men as Nicodemus, doubtless remembering the words of Moses, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me," confessed that Jesus was just such a teacher. (*Luke vii, 76; John vii, 40-52; Deuteronomy xviii, 15.*) This impression was undoubtedly made principally by the spiritual grandeur of the doctrines He unfolded, and, perhaps, not at all by the predictions He uttered. To judge the correctness of the latter requires the lapse of time; for the reputation of a seer depends, not so much on what he foretells, as on what comes to pass; but to judge the real character of the former, merely demands an enlightened mind and familiarity with the divine standard, such as we have in the Old Testament, by which it may be tried. We have already had an opportunity of testing His prophetic dignity by His doctrines, for they came before us in the sermon on His theology; and we are more advantageously situated than His contemporaries were to measure it by His predictions, as we are in a position, eighteen centuries having passed away, to pronounce intelligently on their fulfillment. Nor can we undertake a more important work than this. To examine thoughtfully what He declared should take place in the future, to see how far it has been accomplished, or is being accomplished to-day, is to apply to His claims a criterion of the most decisive nature, and to lay the foundation for conclusions honorable to Him and use-

ful to ourselves. In attempting to aid you in this investigation I shall consider:

First—The prophecies which relate to Himself.

Secondly—The prophecies which pertain to His countrymen.

Thirdly—The prophecies which refer to His kingdom.

Almost from the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus seems to have been conscious of its tragical end. More than once He shows His disciples “how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed;” and how He should be betrayed and “delivered to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him.” (*Matt. xvi, 21, 23; xx, 17-19.*) On one occasion, when the people were amazed at the mighty power of God which appeared in Him, and when His disciples were undoubtedly exulting, He reminded them again of the humiliating conclusion of the whole matter—“The Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” As the solemn hour approaches, He prepares to meet it with dignity; pathetically He alludes to it when partaking with His friends of the last supper, and discourses, as calmly as Socrates did when confronting death, on those sublime themes which were to afford them comfort after His departure. These presentiments, if they deserve no higher name, were, to say the least of them, peculiar. It does not appear that either Buddha or Mohammed entertained such apprehensions, though their course was as objectionable to their countrymen as was that of Jesus. Tyrants have frequently been haunted by fears of a violent end; and sometimes rulers, not thoroughly bad, but whose administration has excited political animosity, have had singular premonitions of a bloody grave. Henry IV of France is an instance in point. We are assured by Sully and other reliable writers that that unfortunate monarch,

the first of the Bourbon dynasty, knew in advance the very day and hour of his assassination; that, according to Schiller, the funeral knell sounded continually in his ears; and that he actually prepared himself for the fatal stroke, feeling persuaded that no earthly precautions could avert the doom decreed by Heaven. But in those days murder was not uncommon, and the fate of his brother-in-law may have awakened solicitude, and this was undoubtedly deepened by the skillful machinations of his enemies. Thus, even his remarkable prescience may be accounted for without recourse to the supernatural. But it is difficult to feel that, in a similar way, the forebodings of Jesus can be explained. He was no oppressor. He had no reason to expect retaliation, for He had never injured a soul. His conscience was too spotless to awaken suspicion in His breast; and though He must have known that His doctrines would excite the bitter opposition of His countrymen, yet, as the power to inflict death was no longer in their hands, having been usurped by the Romans, and as they would be as likely to sympathize with Him as with them, He had no valid ground, in the circumstances which surrounded Him, for His minute and ominous announcements. To account for them rationally we must suppose that He was in some way preternaturally endowed, and that He foresaw what He did, through the interposition of Heaven.

This inference is strengthened by His clear intimations of an approaching personal glory exceeding His shame, and with which there is nothing in the annals of human exaltation to be compared. When He speaks of His death He rarely omits to speak of His resurrection as well. (*Matt. xvi, 21, 23; xvii, 22, 23; and xx, 17, 19.*) In Jerusalem He said to the rulers: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They who heard Him supposed that His language applied to their ancient

and magnificent house; but the evangelist tells us that He "spake of the temple of His body." "When, therefore, He was risen from the dead His disciples remembered that He said this unto them" (*John ii, 19-22*). But this is not all. His foreknowledge traversed beyond His victory over death, and He represented Himself as drawing all men unto Him (*John xii, 23-34*), as being with His disciples unto the end of the world (*Matt. xviii, 20*), and as coming at last in the glory of His Father, with His angels, to reward every man according to his works (*Matt. xvi, 27; xxiv, 30*). These are astounding assumptions and stupendous expectations. Could He hope to realize them? They are uttered calmly, with quiet confidence of their certain fulfillment. Verily, "never man spake like this man." Others have had premonitions of destined greatness; but none have expressed themselves in such terms as these. Cæsar seems to have been fully persuaded that his fortunes were in the special keeping of the gods; Shakspeare, it is said, had a deep conviction of his future world-wide influence; and Napoleon is generally credited with the belief that he was the creature of circumstances, and predestined to power and fame. But their gigantic anticipations dwindle into insignificance when compared with the unsurpassed proportions of our Lord's vaticination regarding His own exaltation. It is hard to say whether we are more amazed when we contemplate the height which He expected to attain, or overwhelmed with astonishment at His presumption. We are certainly seized with giddiness, as, in imagination, we stand on the elevation which He so composedly surveyed, and cast our eyes on the breadth and the depth which He exposed to view. But, after all, He may only have spoken the words of truth and soberness. This is not a question to be decided by feeling, whether it inclines us favorably toward Him or not, but by evidence. What are the facts in the case?

Have His predictions concerning Himself been sufficiently fulfilled, and in manner so palpable as to warrant the confidence that whatever remains will finally be accomplished? It is the well grounded belief of Christendom that He rose from the dead. I say well grounded, for the efforts of centuries have failed to invalidate the proof on which this alleged event relies. This proof I shall examine in a future discourse, and here simply remark that, however inconclusive some minds may esteem it, nevertheless it has succeeded in multiplying converts, and in deepening the popular conviction that the resurrection of Jesus is a fact. To the faith of many millions He has risen from the dead, and has become a living presence of incalculable power and majesty. Admitting, what I am not disposed to admit, that the alleged historical resurrection is a myth, nevertheless, in view of His position in the thought and life of humanity, and of His boundless influence over its movements, His predictions have been marvelously honored. He is not a dead Christ to the world, but living; and we know that He rules imperiously in the domains of morals and religion, and that His law of right dominates the consciences of even those who scorn allegiance to His name. No combination of circumstances or of men has been able to dethrone Jesus or diminish His authority in the earth. In the changes of eighteen centuries, whether political, social, or religious, He has been the most potent of all forces; and to-day there is none other that reigns so absolutely in the affairs of men. What He said, therefore, regarding His exaltation in judgment has already come to pass. He is the Judge to whom humanity goes with the burden of its wrongs and sorrows, before whose righteous decision guilt trembles, and in whose justice outraged innocence reposes with confidence. What further evidence need we? His startling assumptions have been vindicated by history, and the witness which it has borne is sufficient

to convince us that the yet future manifestation of His glory is as certain as its past.

The second class of our Lord's prophecies concerns the tribulations which should befall His countrymen. When He was come nigh unto Jerusalem He wept, and sorrowingly said: "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." (*Luke xix, 43, 44.*) On the Mount of Olives when He discoursed more particularly of these things, He told His disciples that they should see "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," and mournfully added: "They (the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (*Matt. xxiv, 14-36; Luke xxi, 24.*) Beneath the triumphal arch of Titus at Rome, there is a sculpture representing a procession of captives, among whom is seen the seven-branched golden candlestick, the silver trumpets, and the show-bread table which were part of the temple furniture, which mutely, but eloquently, bear testimony to the accomplishment of our Lord's prophecy. That which is thus recorded in stone, to celebrate the conquest of Titus, and which in reality demonstrates the foreknowledge and faithfulness of Jesus, is elaborately described by Josephus. Read the account of the destruction of Jerusalem given by that author, and learn how completely prophecy has been converted into history. Since that eventful period the woes of the chosen people have been indescribable. Constantine treated them as the most hateful of all nations; Justinian destroyed their synagogues and condemned their public worship; and the Emperors generally agreed in forbidding them to approach to what

remained of Jerusalem. Likewise, they have been maltreated, reviled and abused in all centuries, and up to our own time. They have been held responsible for plagues and famines, and have been persecuted and slain. Denounced by the clergy, mobs have attacked them, and the rich have oppressed them. The same sickening details are presented in all countries. The Plantagenets, the Capets, the Bourbons, the House of Austria in Spain, and the House of Hapsburg in Austria, all bespattered their royal garments with Jewish blood. Even the so-called Christian Crusaders made frightful the streets of Treves, Metz, Cologne and Spire with fiendish slaughter of the helpless Israelites. and reddened the waters of the Moselle, the Rhine and the Danube with the crimson life-current from their veins. But if their sufferings have been unparalleled, their preservation has been marvelous. Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Gentiles yet possess it, and the outcast and outraged population has been scattered among all nations. The Portuguese found its representatives in India, missionaries discovered them on the plains of Abyssinia, and the English were confronted by them when they entered Aden in South Arabia. Everywhere they seem to have wandered, and everywhere they are still distinct from the natives. According to natural law they should either be exterminated or assimilated by this time. No other race has been able to preserve its existence and identity under such circumstances; and this solitary exception, therefore, appeals to us more strongly, and forces on us the conviction that this ethnical phenomenon is due to the design of Providence, which, while leaving the race to the consequences of its transgressions, even as Christ foretold, has yet guarded it from annihilation, as Christ predicted, that ultimately, when Jerusalem has ceased to be trodden down of the Gentiles, it may be restored to more than its former glory, and thus become

instrumental in completely establishing the prophetic character of Him whom, in the day of His agony, it rejected.

While Jesus thus paints the future of His countrymen, He does not overlook the course of His Kingdom on earth. The third series of prophecies which He delivers embraces its conditions, its growth, its trials and its triumphs. He tells His disciples that false Christs shall arise and shall deceive many; that they themselves shall be hated of all nations for His sake, and shall be delivered up to affliction and death; that the Gospel shall be preached for a witness unto all nations; and that, at last He shall return to gather His elect and establish His throne in justice and glory. (*Matt. xxiv, xxv.*) Perhaps in all the discourses of Jesus there is none where the pathetic and terrible meet so intimately, and where the storm-clouds gather so threateningly on a summer sky, as in the address where these predictions occur. In a masterly and overpowering manner He draws aside the curtains of time and presents his feeble Church, like a trembling bark submerged in waves, prostrate before winds and yet rising uninjured from the depths—opposed, rent and crushed by the forces of earth, and still emerging from the tempest stronger and more radiant. She is to be harassed by kings, misled by anti-Christ, betrayed by supporters, and humbled by failures, and yet the Gospel of salvation from her lips is to spread like a new atmosphere through the vales, over the hills, and on the seas of our sin-tortured globe. Everywhere it is to extend, carrying moral life, and hope, and joy to the dark places of earth and to the habitations of death. But these prophecies widen and widen in scope. They comprehend the actions of races and generations, until, at last, the sign of the Son of Man appears in the heavens. The picture the Savior paints becomes gloomier and gloomier; His brush at last seems to be dipped in

blood; eternity appears to rush into time, rending society, shattering its pride and ambitions, and crushing in its might the enemies of God.

Much of this portrayal is already history. We find the primitive Church beset behind and before by difficulties — her path a path of thorns, and her progress impeded by steep and savage mountains. How could she hope to escape the power of Jewish prejudice or conquer Roman arrogance? Yet she was freed from the one and triumphed over the other. But the end of one persecution and deliverance from one period only brought her face to face with new forms of old evils. Hunted by the Emperors like a wild beast, she no sooner became their favorite, than they attempted to enmesh her in the silken net of worldliness. She struggled in the toils, and while in one sense rending them, in another she was fascinated by them, and carried them with her to heights of ungodly power. The air of courts corrupted her, and we soon see her climbing to the seat of supreme authority, and demanding from kings and peoples blind and unquestioning homage. What appeared to be the triumph of the Church was practically her ruin. She became great; but it was the greatness of time, not of eternity. She would have been lost to the race but for those who separated themselves from her, and thus we have the Church in two forms, or, rather, two forms claiming each to be the Church, opening the way again for persecutions, oppositions and blasphemies. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, she has steadily grown in beauty and in influence. In spite of divisions, and weakness, and poverty, the deadliness of climates, and the hostility of alien tribes, she has carried her message from pole to pole, circumnavigated the globe with it, and fixed it permanently in the languages of every land and people. The foreign-mission enterprise is no longer a vision, a dream,

an experiment, but a reality and success. But if these things foreshown by Christ are now matters of history, by what logic can we discredit what still remains to be fulfilled? Open anew the prophecies which relate to coming time, and you will not find anything more improbable than has already been accomplished, and certainly from what has been and from what inevitably must be we cannot but infer that Jesus of Nazareth was a true prophet, worthy the reverence and confidence of all ages.

And as such, let me pray you to confide in Him implicitly. Jesus upbraids Jerusalem for killing the prophets, and seeking to palliate her guilt by hypocritically rearing tombs to their memory. Do not many of us deal with Jesus after this fashion? We do not hear Him; we do not obey Him; we cast Him forth from our hearts; we do not permit Him practical concern with our life; but we build Him a tomb. We render Him the homage of death in the sanctuary; we call Him the wonderful Christ, the divine and sacred Christ. Our praises are epitaphs and funeral dirges, and are as creditable to us, and bespeak the same kind of appreciation, as the tomb-building of the Pharisee. Rest assured, as God demanded from the Jews "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from Abel unto the blood of Zacharias," so will He require at your hand an account of your conduct toward Christ. He sent Him to warn, to guide, to enlighten; to show what lies around you, and what opens before you. This has been done. To honor the prophet, it is needful that his message be welcomed, that his counsel be followed, that his predictions be trusted. In this way gratitude is expressed, and a whole graveyard of monuments God will not take in exchange for it. And if in this manner you shall "receive the Prophet in the name of the Prophet," as it is written, "you shall receive the Prophet's reward."

XIV.

THE PHILANTHROPY OF JESUS.

“Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”—*Matthew xxi, 40.*

BEING in Rome, I visited the Vatican, not to see Pope Leo, but to contemplate the multitudinous works of art collected beneath the palace roof. There are master-pieces of Greek and Roman sculpture. Mercuries, Dianas, Apollos, Laocoons, Fauns, Satyrs, are arranged along the corridors, or displayed in separate cabinets, and taken together are worth a life of study. But my profit and pleasure were considerably diminished by the frosty atmosphere that prevailed throughout the stately building. In the different apartments there were braziers of charcoal that gave forth a faint glow; and it was pathetic to see the students of art, and the visitors who had come determined to be benefited, trying to warm themselves by the mocking fires. Heat was practically absent; and after a little while, the groups that had tried in vain to keep from shivering disappeared through the open doorways inviting to the sunshine, their love of comfort or fear of premature death overcoming their love of the beautiful.

Never were there presented to human thought so many fair ideals of perfect loveliness, refining the heart and exalting the imagination, as are furnished by Christianity. Within her sacred courts are the gigantic forms of spiritual heroism, the graceful figures of heavenly perfectness, and,

withal, memorials of the mighty past when God held converse with men, and Jesus died for sinners, surpassing in interest the tablets and sarcophagi which fill so large a space among the antique treasures of the Popes. But it is generally very cold. Here and there in the sacred galleries a few Christians are found, and emit the cheering blaze of generous sympathy; and these gleaming enthusiastic circles draw to themselves many of the halt, the lame, the poor and suffering. But the larger portion of the sacred edifice is unhappily filled with air some degrees below zero. There seems to be so little real interest in human welfare, so chill a flame of love for those who are without, and on the part of the throngs without such a sense of winter, of the winter of hunger and friendlessness, that they have no heart to consider the grand, sweet things religion teaches; and they live away from the Church and seek the sunshine elsewhere, anywhere, outside in the giddy, glittering world. Our Savior in this Scripture aims to avert so deplorable a contingency. And so should we. God help us.

I have never cared to reduce melody to monotone, poetry to prose, sublimity to commonplace, beauty to plainness, or flowers and precious stones to their constituent elements. So I have never cared to analyze parables too nicely, to rob them of the charm which attaches to them as a whole, extracting from each part some precise meaning until they cease to be pictures and degenerate into far-fetched enigmas. It certainly would not improve the human form or aid it to speak its inspiring thoughts to place it on the rack, breaking its bones and dislocating its limbs. So neither by a similar process of interpretation may we hope to sympathize with the eloquent intent of our Lord in His gracious and graceful word-paintings. Nor are the settings and framework of these master-pieces of the first moment, while, of course, every detail of His teachings is of interest. In this instance He is discoursing on last things, and draws accordingly

a vivid sketch of the final award ; but this is not as significant as the doctrine involved in His representations concerning His relation to mankind and the essential genius of the philanthropy He came to illustrate. And it is this philanthropy which He would have His disciples copy, apart from all incidental features of the parable, I desire to unfold and to apply.

It is to be observed that Christ identifies Himself with the most wretched types of human life. In the sad enumeration we find the prisoner, the stranger, the sick, the naked, the hungry, and the thirsty. The moral condition of these suffering classes is not even remotely referred to. We know that the ills endured on earth are not always the result of personal guilt, and that there is such a thing as vicarious losses and burdens. Naturally we suppose when our Lord allies Himself to the afflicted, He restricts His brotherhood to those afflicted ones who are morally pure. But there is no Scripture warrant for this assumption. Remember it is written that "He took on Himself our nature, yet without sin," that "He made His death with the wicked as well as with the rich," and that when in the world He exhibited an extraordinary interest in the outcasts of both sexes. He jeopardized His own reputation by eating with publicans and sinners ; and, what is even more to the point, in "due time Christ died for the ungodly," and not only "carried our grief, but bore our iniquities." It would seem, therefore, that we are justified in concluding that His identification of Himself in this parable with the wretched embraces the blameworthy as well as the blameless.

He is kin to all the world, and His heart beats in tenderest sympathy with those whose misfortunes have reached the climax of calamity through the consciousness of personal guilt. Just as the gracious sun draws to itself water from the stagnant, slimy pool as well as from the unpoisoned ocean, and in its mysterious fire purges, and every drop

returns pure and glistening, so Jesus by His incarnation takes humanity as a whole into His bosom that each individual may be renewed, and may become a shining blessing to the race. What a comment is this on the usual attitude of more favored members of society toward the degraded and despairing! As long since as the days of Job, privations and afflictions were esteemed the sure marks of Divine disapproval, and as forfeiting the claims of the victim to consideration. In pagan lands and in times nearer to our own, the same spirit prevailed, only with more unreasoning bitterness. Success, prosperity, freedom from care, became the test of merit; and where these blessings were not enjoyed, it was not deemed illegitimate to hound, abuse, curse, and deride the children of adversity. If the theories underlying these practices have been somewhat modified by Christianity, the practices have not altogether ceased. In some quarters there is an assumption that business victories are closely allied to virtues, and that evil fortune must result from ill-desert. Hence the bearing of the purse-proud toward the poor is generally patronizing and pretentious. Where this is not the case, there is still manifest a feeling that the people who have gone wrong morally should not be pitied, but should be left to endure the full measure of penalty. "Why should we interfere?" inquires the respectable citizen. "These moral bankrupts are not entitled to compassion, and schemes of reform are impertinent attempts to revise the providence of God. Let the riff-raff go to the dust bins, and even let us aid Providence by heaping the dust upon them."

But the thought of Christ is not cast in this mold. He does not countenance the theory that gain and goodness are inseparable; but He teaches that instead of adding to the shame and sorrow, even of the infamous, we are to sympathize with them, and, if possible, save, the extent of our obligation to help being determined by the extent and deplor-

ableness of their need. Instead of defilement, deformity, and utter degeneracy repelling, they are rather to attract, in hope of relaxing their terrible hold. The reason of this is the very reason for the incarnation itself, which, though springing from the love of God, must have been influenced by the fact that the loss of humanity would be a terrible loss, there being in it a grandeur back of its sinfulness, the eternal eclipse of which would impoverish the universe. In our harsh, sweeping judgments we are tempted to say of whole classes of our fellows, "the world would be better without them. Let them perish, yea, by our scorn and neglect let us help them to perish." But Jesus answers: "Stop; my Father's glory would have been shadowed, a void throughout His kingdom would have been felt, if man had been left to destruction, hence I became incarnate to disclose the worth of his nature, and to save; and it is that worth, attested by Heaven, that calls on you, in spite of demerit, to always consider him as one with myself."

It follows, if Christ has identified Himself with the most wretched types of human life we must deal with these types as we would with Himself. He does not leave us in doubt as to what He would have a right to expect in specific circumstances of adversity. He is clear and definite in His directions. If He were hungry He would expect us to feed Him; and were He naked, or sick, or in prison, He would look for relief suitable to His necessities. So Christian philanthropists must adapt their ministrations to the peculiar needs of the suffering classes. While beyond all doubt spiritual succor is the blessing most imperatively demanded, this must not be so understood as to supersede temporal relief. Christianity is social in its scope as well as spiritual. While I can sympathize with the old preacher, who, when reproved for not speaking on topics of the times answered: "Well, if my brethren are given to discussions on the times, surely one poor minister may be allowed to dwell on eter-

nity" — still the true rule is that "the one should be done and the other not be left undone." Divine teachers may not be indifferent to the earthly well-being of their fellows. The early Church was considerate of the poor, and did not even despise the criminal classes. Her benefactions, Emperors being judges, had much to do with the conquest of the pagan world. So even in the Middle Ages she was the almoner of states and kings, and though often she abused her trust, she was looked on as the friend of the friendless and fallen. In a season much giving to rationalizing, and to poor-laws and secular bounties, she grew inactive in this department of her mission. Healthy signs, however, are not wanting of a practical revival of interest in this work. General Booth's book, *Darkest England*, has done a good beyond securing money for a direct endeavor to save "the submerged tenth"; for it has thrown light on the terrible condition of millions of men and women, and has quickened the conscience of the Church as to her obligations. While he is to be criticised for not calling attention to what she is already accomplishing in this field, his appeal and censure have justified her in showing what she is doing, and have stimulated her to attempt more. But there is a peril even in his elaborated plans, an evil to be avoided in all schemes of social assistance; it is that complicated organization may obscure the heart, with the tender compassion, that really prompted it and to which its maintenance is due.

This brings me to a notable feature in our parable. Jesus emphasizes personal contact and personal influence in philanthropy. "Ye did it to Me," or "ye did it not," "ye visited, ye fed, ye clothed," says He. You cannot without blame hand over your charities to committees. In these times complex mechanism is undoubtedly required; but even there, where the multiplied wheels are "beneath the wings the hands of a man" should be seen. Within certain limits it is indispensable that we coöperate with others; only that

does not end individual responsibility, or absolve from individual oversight. Were Jesus Himself the object of our care, we would not willingly minister to Him by substitute. We would desire to see Him, and to show that our service was one of love, not merely of expediency or of necessity. This is the example we are to follow in dealing with the unhappy and unfortunate among our neighbors; and this is the more imperative as any other method must fail of permanent good. I do not say that the crust of bread is to be given always with the direct intent of accomplishing spiritual benefit; for at times it should be given to save from starvation. But whatever the intent, if given in a proper spirit, it must produce higher results than the satisfying of hunger. Let it be bestowed thoughtfully, generously, tenderly, and the act will rouse the nobler nature in the recipient. We have theological seminaries to teach men how to preach; but where are the schools to teach how to be wisely benevolent? We have training-schools to instruct youths and maidens in the science of Bible interpretation; but where the institution that will reveal how to succor the needy and not leave bitterness behind? Genius and labor are given to the acquisition of knowledge on all subjects, and we qualify experts to attend to houses, horses, and other ordinary things, but we never think of adepts in the difficult task of relieving without brutalizing. The majority of benevolent souls are novices, and their liberality does themselves more good than it does to those who receive the gift. But they have no more right to gratify themselves in this way than the maskers in Rome during Carnival have to endanger their neighbors' eyes by the reckless throwing of *confetti*. We ought to study, — study men and especially Christ's way of doing good. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his latest poem, very picturesquely discloses the result of His method. He compares Mary of Magdala to a majestic Mount in Cathay or Japan, "whose lofty bulk, raged once all flame," —

“ Which broke its boundaries,
And, — torn and red and furious, — scattered round
Levin, and lava-slime, and barren ash,
Blighting what lay below, then came the hush ;
And that which was all terrible grew fair,
The Hill of Hell is crest of Paradise ! ”

Then follows a glowing description of this mountain after the subsidence of the terrible eruption. He then applies the contrast to the saved Magdalene. She had been “ brought from passions stilled,” from “ tempests of the blood,” and now fairer is she than when —

“ All the South was loud with talk of her
Who walked in woven gold, and wore her braid —
A queen of sin — crowning the shameless brow
With diadem of tresses, tied with pearls.”

How came this marvelous transformation? Jesus had saved her from the devils that possessed her. He rescued her body from a deadly curse, and that brought her soul in homage to the spiritual truths He proclaimed.

It must be evident that we do not deal with the poor as with Christ Himself when charity is administered in the spirit of ostentation or of officialism. We cannot have forgotten our Lord's description of those who do their alms before men, to be seen of them, and His exhortation for the right hand to be kept in ignorance of the left hand's doing. Here we have the doing of a good thing in a mean way, with the inevitable debasement. The community of the impecunious sitting in judgment is only confirmed in its impecuniosity by what it sees. Cynically it argues, if giving to the poor did not bring an adequate compensation these men would not give, and hence it is questionable whether the giver or the receiver is the real pauper ; for the proud Pharisee has a hunger and thirst for praise which would never be appeased except for the mendicant. As in such a case

there is no appeal to the gratitude and the nobler nature of the beneficiary, there is no motive introduced leading to self-hood and self-respect. The beggar pays in adulation for current cash, and as the equivalent has been given no obligation is felt.

There is likewise a blustering, insulting way of conferring relief that leaves a sting behind, and that converts an agency of good into an instrument of torture. In this instance the Phariseism is of a different type, but it is the same miserable spirit of self-display. The lordly giver, whose own transactions would hardly bear the scrutiny of the Grand Jury, impressively lectures the applicant for help on his evident lack of industry and frugality, on his shiftlessness and general worthlessness; and thus having demonstrated to his own satisfaction his own personal superiority he doles out a miserable pittance. Verily, he and the rest of them have their reward. One pays for praise, and he gets it; the other for a docile listener, and he gets what he desires; but the All-Father is angry with them, for they are spreading the disease they pretend to cure.

When our Savior expresses His mind on this subject, there are usually some persons who pretend to misunderstand his meaning. Ask them for a contribution, and they reply: "My right hand must not know what my left does;" or, in a stiff, dignified way, "I never give to be seen of men." Now, as a rule, the left hand could not know what the right bestows, for it never bestows anything, and a microscope would be necessary to discover what such persons have ever given to the poor. Do not pervert Scriptures: your giving may be seen of men and must be seen by *some* men, — by the recipients at least; but unless it is given for the purpose that *men may see*, there is no distortion of the grace itself. Remember that God sees through paltry excuses of every description, and traces all of them to one source — the heart destitute of love.

While we regret the existence of ostentation, we likewise deplore the prominence often given to officialism in the work of charity. This perversion is not frequent in churches. Of course, those who are charged with the delicate task of succoring the needy, have to make necessary inquiries — for they are accountable to others for the money they spend — and hence may seem perfunctory and exacting; but rarely can they be fairly accused of a lack of sympathy or of tenderness. But if we may believe a tithe of the stories that come to us the same cannot be said of the dispensation of charity by the officers of various benevolent societies. Personally, I am not willing to give credence to reports damaging to institutions of this character. I, therefore, express no opinion on the subject; and only utter a word of warning. The peril is, that officialism may counteract and frustrate the higher purpose of the assistance afforded. There may be such coldness, such unsparing curiosity, such inquisitorial cruelty, such an invasion of all that is private in life, and, withal, such coarseness, that the suppliant may feel outraged and humiliated beyond expression, and may lose the last instinct of self-respect. The English people profess to have a horror of the workhouse and the almshouse, and yet these asylums are crowded. Evidently a loveless system has failed to diminish indigence. I wonder whether the explanation lies in the probability that the system itself tends to brutalize? Understand, I do not plead for, nor expect, on the part of paid representatives of philanthropy anything approaching to passionate interest in their work; but I do insist that it is dishonored by harshness, impatience, and by unnecessary endeavors to make the helpless feel their desolation and friendlessness.

Nor is charity exercised in the spirit of this parable, and as to Christ Himself when it is tainted by partisanship or paternalism. We are all aware that there are many schemes in vogue, plans and institutions for the relief of the indigent. On none of these do I desire to pass judgment; for I prefer

to leave the application of my thoughts to those who are directly interested. But I admonish you not to make the cause of charity a plea for an assault on the rich. There are so-called social philanthropists whose sole business is to kindle animosity and antipathy, and to create the impression that prosperity has no rights adversity is bound to respect. No good comes of this talk, and it only tends to alienate classes from each other. Consider how much has been done by millionaires for the development of the country, and of the vast sums they have spent in alleviating sorrow and suffering.

But, on the other hand, philanthropy must not seem to befriend the wealthy. Charity departs from the ideal of the Galilean when it sets itself to fulsome praise of the money power, and especially does it err when it becomes oblivious to wrongs inflicted by greed. May charity ever become indignant, may she take up the cry of "woe! woe! woe!" to the oppressor? As it is she is taxed to eke out the insufficient wages paid by capital to labor. Benevolent organizations make up deficiencies, supply fuel and medicine, in some of the families where pants are made for nine and a half cents a pair, or knee pants for sixteen cents a dozen pair, or aprons for about fifteen cents a dozen (see *White Slaves* by Banks). That is, the general public is helping to maintain the employés of these firms, while the profits go into the pockets of the firm. This is protection with a vengeance. We first impose a revenue on the people in the interest of manufacturers, and then we tax the people a second time to provide for the underpaid laborers of these same corporations. Charity must protest. Silence on her part means degradation. She must, of course, assist the sufferer; but she ought, at the same time, to placard by name the business concerns that are guilty.

She ought also to realize that it is not her business to take care of the indigent, to supersede entirely their endeavors, but to relieve present distress and to prepare the helpless to provide for themselves. We have no right to breed pauper-

ism ; and the acts that do so are not as beautiful as many imagine, and are not in accord with the example of our Lord. It is well known to students of economics that when Rome supplied corn gratuitously to the populace, oil and wine had to be added, and that independence and energy declined as these benefactions increased. England from Elizabeth's time has gone through the same experience ; and it will ever be so. It is, therefore, in the interest of self-reliant manhood that I protest against paternalism. If we create the impression that all persons have a right to be sustained by others, the beggarly clientage of society will multiply indefinitely. It is asked, Has not every man a right to bread? Yes, if he earns it ; and if he is past earning it he ought to receive it : but if men do not sufficiently value life to provide for it, then we ought not to be so terribly anxious to preserve an existence they value so lightly. But scores of benevolent souls never think of this, and just follow their generous impulses without counting the cost. The story is told of a venerable clergyman coming in from Cambridge one sultry day, and seeing an old gentleman with his hat in his hand he dropped a quarter in it and hurried away, happy in the consciousness of a good deed done ; and yet the recipient of his bounty was Oliver Wendell Holmes, who needed not the money, and who had only taken off his hat to mop his perspiring forehead. This incident opens a volume of interesting casuistry. What right had the giver to give without any practical aim, and run the risk of making the receiver believe that society ought to look after his particular welfare? Not in this way would Jesus have us assist the poor ; and certainly not in any such way as this would we presume to minister to Him, were we to come suddenly into His presence.

There is another thought in the Scripture we are studying worthy of consideration. We are assured, if we deal with the most wretched types of human life as we would with Christ Himself, He will regard our ministry as directed

toward Himself, and will esteem and honor it accordingly. This is plainly stated, and the force and beauty of the parable are particularly apparent at this point. Note, it does not say, because you succored the needy for My sake I praise you, but only, though unconscious of any purpose to succor Me, you really did so in helping suffering men and women. How readily would we do everything that is commanded in this Scripture were the Savior as we know Him in need. I say as we know Him, exalted, triumphant, regnant. Were the King on earth, and by some mishap in prison, we would go to Him and visit Him gladly ; of course, I would not vouch for our alacrity were we in doubt of His personality. But might not this ministry be somewhat suspected of self-interest, as when one merchant lends another a check in an emergency that he may borrow in his turn? It is different when we feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, simply as members of the same race as ourselves ; for then we give without expecting a recompense. Generosity and unselfishness in these circumstances have opportunity of development and free play. The impression in some minds that what is done in the name of Christ must be morally elevated and free from harmful elements is not outborne by history. Motive does not always insure golden deeds, however it may gild them. How many crimes have been committed, how many meannesses have been perpetrated in His name, we cannot estimate. It has been made an excuse for atrocious cruelties, for abominable excesses, villainous outrages, and deadly feuds. Indeed, it has been allied with so many wrongs, we have grown suspicious, and when paraded we begin to doubt the sincerity of the speaker. Often, too, when it is not spoken how much of sweet charitableness we discover.

Lately a woman applied to a church officer for relief. Her story was a sad one. When asked about her husband she said, "He could neither read nor write, and found it hard to procure employment, and had been thrown out of work by

the falling in of a tunnel where he had been engaged. He never spent a penny on drink, was mindful of his family, and was a good man, but not a Christian." How strange it sounds, *good* but not a *Christian*; and there are many such. Surely to such the Lord would say, "As ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." That I have not missed the Savior's thought observe the surprise of both parties at the great Assize. Those who had done good disclaim having done it to Jesus, and those who had neglected to do it are equally amazed that they should be blamed for not having ministered to Him. Tolstoi, in my opinion, catches the spirit of our Lord's teaching in the story of the shoemaker who expected one day a visit from the Christ. While waiting he feeds an old soldier, succors a forlorn woman and her child, and reconciles an aged grandmother selling apples, and a wanton boy. And at night when disappointed he reads this parable, he realizes that the Lord was with him in these suffering creatures and he knew it not. And in the following sweet little anecdote we have another illustration equally forceful:

A Russian soldier, one very cold, piercing night, kept duty between one sentry-box and another. A poor working man, moved with pity, took off his coat and lent it to the soldier to keep him warm; adding that he should soon reach home, while the soldier would be exposed out-of-doors for the night. The cold was so intense that the soldier was found dead in the morning. Some time afterwards the poor man was laid on his death-bed, and in a dream saw Jesus appear to him. "You have got my coat on," said the man. "Yes, it is the coat you lent to Me that cold night when I was on duty and you passed. I was naked and you clothed Me."

I am not oblivious to the theological difficulty which this view presents. Are we to conclude that men are saved by works, and that, after all the Puritans have said to the

contrary, merit does attach to them? I have long been of the opinion that we carry the Puritan idea too far. The works that do not save are specified as “works of the law,” or “of the flesh” — *i.e.*, conformity to ceremonialism, and deeds that are prompted by carnal motives and pride — as in the case of those “who did their alms before men, to be seen of them, and had their reward.” But the charities inspired by the gospel and performed in its beautiful disinterestedness, while they do not atone for sin, have in them a gracious worth, or they would not be commended as they are, and have also a saving tendency, as bringing the heart into harmony with the spirit of Jesus and leading to Him as Redeemer. “He that doeth My words shall know of the doctrine.” And in this parable, mark the benefactions dispensed bring at last to Jesus; for He discloses Himself to the lovers of their kind as the supreme arbiter of their destiny. We have, therefore, reason to believe that the benevolence of the benevolent will gradually open their eyes to the loveliness of their Lord.

Yet I am bound to say that he is happy who tarries not in his acceptance of the Savior; for living fellowship with Him will refine the heart and render susceptible the feelings, and, in this case, will lead us to succor many who have not the least resemblance to Him. Even such will be surprised at the last. Some whom we did aid disclose a likeness to their Lord; and in the light of this parable we know whom we assist. But the most wretched are godless and deformed, and present no trace of kindred to Him or to His people. Will it not, therefore, be a surprise, even though we have meditated on this Scripture, to hear Him say, “As ye did it unto *them* ye did it unto Me?”

The most impressive sight I saw during a sojourn in Europe was a funeral. It was not the obsequies of a monarch or soldier, but of a woman; not a queen, but an earnest follower of Jesus. The services were held in Olym-

pia, an enormous building, and thirty thousand people were present. The day had been foggy, and the mists rolled into the vast auditorium, obscuring the end of the hall when the cortege entered. Through the haze there first appeared the draped flags, and then the forms of men and women, in what seemed like military array. It was the "Salvation Army" bearing the body of Mrs. Booth, of whose praise the papers for days before had been full. When I saw the tiny casket so reverently borne, and remembered the loving homage of the people, and that it was all because she had served the most wretched of the race, I could not but recall the words, "As ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me." And as I turned away from the throng I repeated the text, and thoughtfully recalled Sir Edwin Arnold's poetic paraphrase, —

" 'Enter ye in, who nursed Me, lying sick,
And fed Me, being hungered ; gave Me robes
When I was naked, wiped My tears away
In heavy-hearted days, and pitied Me,
And helped Me, cast in prison with the thieves !'
And when we answer : ' Oh, dear Lord ! but how
Saw we Thee sick, or hungered, or unclad,
Or sad, or cast in prison ? ' Christ shall say :
' Inasmuch as ye did it to the least
Of these My brothers, it was done to Me !
Aye ! 'twas to Me, — and 'twas to God through Me —
Ye gave that cup of water ! I lay sick
With him ye succored ; I was languishing
In prison with the broken hearts ye cheered ;
That was My nakedness ye covered up
Clothing My Poor ; I was the babe ye fed ;
I was that widow whom ye visited ;
Share My joy now, who helped My Father then !
Enter ye in ! ' "

XV.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS.

He was transfigured before them.—*Mark ix, 2.*

IN the northern boundary of Palestine Mount Hermon stands robed with verdure and crowned with snow. Its venerable triple crest rises some ten thousand feet above the western sea, and overlooks the land of Zebulon and of Naphtali, and even brings within the range of vision the silver-gleaming waters of Galilee, and the broken, rugged country about Nazareth. From the near neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi Jesus, with three of His disciples, came to pray and meditate on those white hills near to Heaven; and there the resplendent event described in the text took place, which had more of heavenly glory in it than any other that occurred during His earthly ministry. Both He and His followers needed the composure which Nature's tranquillity is fitted to impart, and the seclusion for communion with God which Nature's solitudes afford, for they had been conversing on subjects discouraging and distressful, and He had grown weary with their dullness, and they with His impenetrable paradoxes. Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, "the Son of the living God," and Jesus had discoursed on the character and the indestructibleness of His church; but just as hope and enthusiasm were kindling their fires in the breast of the apostles, He began to speak of His betrayal and death. They were instantaneously depressed, and having remonstrated with Him they were thrown into deeper despondency by His announcement that even they "must

lose their life if they would save it." This was more than they could bear. That they, the chosen of Heaven, the representatives of the new economy, should be subject to humiliation and cross-bearing was so contrary to their expectations that it was offensive to their pride and incredible to their faith. The Master, while worn and tried by their childishness and by their apparent inability to appreciate what He said regarding the inevitableness of His resurrection, and yet sympathizing with their perplexities, assured them that some among them should not taste death till they had seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. The fulfillment of this prediction would convince them that the darkness which they dreaded was inseparable from the light, and that the cheerless valleys through which they and He were bound to pass would widen at last into the broad sunlit plains of victory. Thus He sought to remove the doubts and fears of His followers, and, according to the testimony of Peter, His encouraging prophecy was accomplished when He was transfigured before them "in the holy mount" (*II Peter i, 16-18*).

When Moses returned from his mysterious intercourse with the Almighty on Sinai, the skin of his face shone so intensely that Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid. An apostle referring to this phenomenon says that they could not steadfastly behold his face for the glory of his countenance; and, consequently, he had to wear a veil until he had completed the delivery of his message. Just as the surface of a sheet of water will reflect back the splendor of the sun, so the features of the lawgiver were lit up by the brightness which marks the presence of Jehovah, and it was more insufferable to mortal eyes than the molten golden glow of the sun itself. There is something singularly impressive in his surroundings, and, by contrast, in the great change that came over his appearance. The loneliness of the somber mountain, tormented by

cruel tempests, and haunted by death, the appropriate symbol of sternness, sterility, and gloom, became the sacred ground where infinite goodness was displayed, where the prolific words of eternal truth were spoken, and where the refulgent light of Divine perfection was imparted. What a contrast! How different the scene from the drama; how dissimilar the uninviting locality and the events which have rendered it forever memorable! Nowhere can a comparison be found to match them, save in that which surpassed them both in dreariness and radiance—namely, the transfiguration of our Lord. A proscribed man, contemplating death, burdened with care, seeking, apart from the habitations of His fellows and under shadow of night, a refuge from the gathering storm, undergoes a transformation more wonderful than that which came over Moses, even as His circumstances were more cheerless and disconsolate than those which environed the lawgiver. The face only of the Hebrew leader reflected the luster of Heaven's Majesty; but the entire form, countenance, and garments alike of Jesus were saturated and flooded with an unearthly brilliancy. In a moment He seems to have been converted into a living column of light. Even His poor peasant's raiment seems to have become like burnished silver, whiter than a virgin's robe, and more resplendent than coronation vestments of ancient kings. In the case of Moses, the "celestial sheen" that dazzled others was but the after-glow of a Divine sun-setting—the reflection of a glory that had fallen on him from without. With Jesus it was somewhat different. His transfiguration was not due to external causes. The bright cloud that overshadows Hermon, or the spirits of the sainted dead who trod its snows cannot satisfactorily account for it, as we find that the three disciples were in proximity to both, and yet were not affected as Jesus was. We cannot, therefore, ascribe the change to either. It

must have been due to an inner, native, and pent-up glory which could not be restrained, and which, surging like a swollen sea, overflowed its physical boundaries, and deluged even the habiliments of poverty with its flood.

You have doubtless observed at times the witness which the human countenance bears to the state of the emotions. Moral feelings express themselves materially. Joseph Cook has called attention to the solar look, and a careful induction leads to the conclusion that it is natural for sin to invest the face with shadows, and for righteousness to beautify it with light. Hence, notice the difference between a laughing, innocent infant and a scowling, guilty criminal. The skin of the one is white and transparent, the eyes radiant and sparkling, as though suns and stars were flashing in the soul, while the skin of the other is dark and dusky, and the eyes dull and cold, as though the fires had gone out and left the soul like the crater of an extinct volcano. If the spiritual in man reveals and asserts itself in this way, if virgin-like purity shines with the unobtrusive gleam of the pearl, and if the aureole around the head of the most saintly is the tribute of imagination to holiness, then we may believe what I have ventured to assume — that the outward splendor of Jesus on Hermon was due to some mighty upheaval in the inner life. This analogy, faint though it may be, shows how a spiritual cause may have produced this physical result; and if we may measure the magnitude of the cause by the grandeur of the result, then it must follow, since the highest human virtue has never produced in comparison with the transfiguration more than the glow-worm's luster, that the transfiguration must be attributed to the realization of the Divine nature in the consciousness of Jesus. This, I hold, is a legitimate inference, and the only satisfactory explanation of the marvelous transition we are studying. Accept this view, and the sublime

transaction becomes reasonably clear, and at a glance we are able to perceive the transcendency of the scene on Hermon over that of Sinai. Moses comes in personal contact with the Almighty, and his face catches and reflects His glory, as I have seen the Jungfrau bathe her white head in the sun's crimson glow, and then flash and quiver like an opalescent diadem. With Jesus it was different. The "fullness of the Godhead," whatever that may mean, dwelt in His mortal nature, and on Hermon broke through it, as the inner fires of earth might stream through the outer shell and envelop it with intolerable flame, or as the colored beauty and fragrant breath pent up and treasured in the bud of flower burst forth in early summer to sweeten the air and adorn the landscape.

There is nothing identical with this in human experience, but there is something similar. Never does the physical form of man, however radiant at times it may appear, take on the glistening glory of the transfiguration; but there are supreme moments in the soul's history when it passes from a lower to a higher state, and when it becomes resplendent with lofty thoughts and heavenly emotions. Men have their higher moods, when they are oblivious to the sway of passion and indifferent to the sights and sounds of earth, and when they are consciously superior to the glittering meanness of the world in which they live. There are seasons when they tread on clouds more gorgeous than any in which the sun was ever cradled; they behold visions fairer than art has ever painted, and hear melodies sweeter than music has ever discoursed. Now the ecstasy of religion, then the intoxication of genius, or the delicious delirium of fancy, thrills them with scorn of their base, everyday surroundings, and cheapens the affairs which ordinarily appeal so potently to their vulgar ambitions and desires. These are the sacred hours when poetry indites her song, when har-

mony chants her anthem, when art outlines her picture or her marble, and when piety prophesies of Heaven, and when are born those fair and grand ideals which human skill falls short of executing, and which no amount of cultured care and loving labor can ever actualize. Fittingly may such exalted experiences be regarded as the soul's transfiguration; for, like the transfiguration of our Lord, they reveal a nature mysteriously, unexplorably and almost infinitely great. Such an elevation is sometimes touched in that spiritual transition known commonly as conversion. When the depth of personal depravity and guilt has been sounded, and when, in answer to the earnest cry for mercy, the consciousness of Divine forgiveness is enjoyed, the sinner often feels himself capable of devotion, sacrifice and heroism, such as in previous mental states he never realized, and rises to visions of a land whose fadeless and matchless glories eye cannot compass nor tongue report. I do not say that all who turn from their iniquities to Christ attain to this height of blessedness, neither do I claim that any should rely on rhapsodies as evidence of acceptance with God; but I do believe that they are possible and, in many instances, actual.

But perhaps more frequently are they experienced later in the Christian career. During sacred seasons of religious meditation, when the soul is athirst for God, when it ardently searches for Him within and without, and when it seems to tread the very confines of the invisible, then spiritual powers unrecognized before assert themselves, then thought grows luminous and expansive, and then the saint thrills with tremulous delight at the sublime possibilities of existence. There are also moments in real life when endeavors are put forth far beyond ordinary strength, surpassing likewise in moral dignity all other acts, and which, if their sources could be analyzed, would reveal a sudden uprising of the better nature. That girl, who

on the night of the tempest, when wind and wave had rendered fatally insecure the giddy trestle-bridge over which the approaching train would attempt to traverse, crept painfully along the narrow, frail support, with a yawning abyss beneath and elemental strife around, that she might warn and save the Express then speeding to its ruin, must have been under powerful emotion — must have reached a degree of exaltation that transformed her from a timid maiden into something more than woman. She and others who accomplish similar feats in reality enter the same domain of lofty and excited feeling which the poet and the artist enter when their dream-like ideals flash upon them; only their fervid conceptions take shape in book or picture, while the image which uplifts itself before the hero-soul takes form in deeds—in deeds more musical than rhythmic verse, and more vivid than gorgeous-colored picture. And thus through life, at various periods, these higher moods come over us when, with Paul, we hardly know whether we are in the body, or out of the body; and in the hour of death many a saint has experienced them more fully than ever, and has thought himself out of the body while yet in the body. Then the grander, diviner nature comes to the forefront of consciousness, and its mighty pinions, which never more than fluttered in the past, are felt to be outspread and uplifting the immortal spirit far above the malarial fogs of earth and the prison-house of time.

When Jesus was transfigured He held communion with the departed. Moses and Elijah appeared in company with Him on Mount Hermon; the one, according to a favorite idea of the commentators, representing the Law, the other the Prophets; the one recalling the foundation of Israel as a commonwealth, the other its reformation. Most likely they came from the unseen to bear testimony to our Lord's Messiahship, especially to honor Him in

the presence of His disciples as the Being promised whose coming should inaugurate a new era. This tribute was of grave moment just at that crisis, when the hearts of His followers were failing them for fear, and when gloomy disappointment was mastering their faith. It has an equal value, though in a different direction, for us. We are not inclined to question the dignity of Jesus, or to reject His office-work on account of the humiliating circumstances of His life; and therefore we could easily dispense with this supernatural visitation; but we are in this materialistic age sadly tortured with doubts regarding the future, and the return of any soul from its invisible domain cannot fail to do us good. Moses and Elijah came back, and "trailing clouds of glory" did they come; and as we trace their spirit-forms we feel more assured of man's immortality. Their existence after death becomes to us a pledge of our own, and their manifestation at a time so momentous in the history of the early Church would seem to indicate that the conscious dead are not as far from the conscious living as we generally suppose. May there not be solemn seasons in the progress of souls on earth, when souls from Heaven may disclose to their spiritual vision some gleams of the radiant hereafter, or by impressions and gentle whisperings soothe their sorrows and strengthen them against misfortune? I have sometimes felt in the stillness of the night, in mountain solitude and on lonely ocean, that angel-robes were rustling near me, and that spirit-feet were glistening in the dew, and treading the liquid fields; and I have looked into the silvery obscurity—and who has not done the same?—hoping to see revealed some dear long-since vanished face, which, though it came not, seemed to beam upon me with unspeakable tenderness. This is not Spiritism, unless the transfiguration is. I am as far from believing as any of my brethren that the dead are to be invoked, or that they

will obey the demands of idle curiosity, or will exhibit themselves to the eyes of those who are seeking to gratify their vulgar love of the marvelous. But why we should feel compelled to deny the possibility of intercourse between this world and the next, because it has been perverted by superstition, I never could understand. There is no good reason for such denial; and it would be certainly unwise to dogmatize with the shadows of Moses and Elijah falling on the snows of Hermon. But, whether their appearance warrants the belief that others may return in seasons of distress to help the living, one thing is certain, that the soul in its transfiguration state, in its exalted and ecstatic moods, peoples the scene with the heroes and saints of former ages. At such times we commune with the glorious spirits of the past. They come to us and hold high discourse on themes that minister to delight, and enchant us with the marvels of their thought. Commanded by imagination, memory invokes them, and, though they emerge from the shadowy region of the soul and not from the invisible realm, and though they are the creatures of fancy and not of reality, they are to us as living presences whose sacred ministry tends to calm our restlessness and to subdue our passions.

The evangelist informs us that Jesus and His mysterious visitants talked together of His decease. This was doubtless to remind the apostles that His death was to be something exceptional in the history of mortality. And if we may believe the Scriptures it was certainly more significant and more wondrously fruitful in results than any other on which the light has ever fallen. It is represented as being in some vital sense necessary for salvation—an expiation, an atonement, an expression of infinite love to fallen man. To hear these sacred personages converse on such a theme ought to have satisfied the listening disciples that the death they dreaded in no wise weakened the

Lord's claim to be the world's Messiah, and should have prepared them for the inevitable. Why it did not I shall not pause to answer, even if an adequate answer could be given. But what is more to my purpose, let me call attention to the resemblance that exists between this portion of the memorable transaction we are considering and one peculiar phase of the soul's experience in its hours of transport. From what I have read, and from what I have felt, I am persuaded that in our grandest moods we instinctively find a place for death in our thoughts. When we are filled with a strange light, and the orchestra of our being breaks forth into soothing or exciting harmony, we not only commune with the departed, but we likewise think of ourselves as dying, and of that change through which all mortals pass in attaining the blessings of immortality. I question whether anyone ever tasted this fullness of life without instantaneously invoking the image of death. But why should it be associated with our most pleasurable emotions? Why should it haunt us with its pale face when our nobler self asserts its sovereignty? This is my answer: The thoughts and feelings which mark the soul's transfiguration belong to Heaven more than earth, find there their fitting soil, their native skies, and flourish in perennial glory there, while here they are ephemeral and vanishing; and it is, therefore, no more than natural that they should incline us toward that grim messenger on whose faithfulness they depend for ultimate perfection. Nay more, in reality, death is not the horrible monster which the imagination under the trembling weakness of the body paints it. An angel of light it rather is, though to the dull sense it is robed in darkness. When, therefore, the mind is in exalted frame, and when the spiritual vision has been clarified, its true character is discerned, fear is taken away, and its embrace would then be welcomed; and perhaps these gracious glimpses are

permitted to prepare us for the messenger when he comes, and to remind us in that solemn hour of the glorious kingdom just beyond to which he is the forbidding guide.

I have already intimated that this transfiguration is evanescent. I repeat it. More than once in the course of human life it may be enjoyed, though perhaps never twice in the same degree, but in the nature of things it never can be a permanent condition. The flesh could not endure the strain, and the mind itself would ultimately give way beneath such excitation were it prolonged indefinitely, or were it to recur too frequently. Moreover it would tend to unfit both head and heart for practical concern in secular and religious work. We know already that they who live in ordinary dreamland, who give themselves to reverie, and, much more, those influenced to a high degree by poetic fancy, are generally impracticable, and with great difficulty bring themselves down to the level of sober, and commonplace affairs. How then would it be, were we to live perpetually on the mount, enchanted by its glory, and bathed in its holy light? Alas! we would be apt to say as did the disciples on Hermon, "It is good for us to be here; let us build three tabernacles." There would they have willingly remained, heedless of the suffering not far from them; and, lost in their own enjoyment, they would have neglected the world crying piteously for help in the dark places beyond. Raphael, in his celebrated picture of Christ's transfiguration, represents two separate incidents: the calm majesty of the sacred figures, standing in the golden light of Paradise, fills the upper portion of the masterpiece, while below, and in striking contrast, the excited throng of people gathered near the possessed lad is sadly and strongly depicted. Here we have the extremes of blessedness and wretchedness, of repose and restlessness, of joy and sorrow; and the artist in combining them on one canvas would doubtless teach what the example of

our Lord, who went immediately from the mountain to a work of practical philanthropy, also teaches, that in our supreme moments of almost celestial happiness we should not forget the suffering millions who lie moaning at our doors; and that, if we would care for them, we must leave our exalted moods and come down to them in the spirit of helpful sympathy. From all of which let us learn that, while these high and sweet experiences are to be sought and coveted, we should neither grow morbid nor discouraged when they cease; but from them should gather inspiration for the discharge of that healing ministry to which we have been called by Christ.

One final thought. We naturally ask, How is this soul-transfiguration to be attained? The scene on Hermon furnishes an answer. You remember that the disciples were anxious to build tabernacles to Moses and Elijah, as well as to Jesus. But as they spake the prophet and the lawgiver vanished from their eyes, and they beheld "Jesus only," while a Divine voice exclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." All this was significant. It indicated in the clearest manner the exclusive supremacy of Jesus in everything pertaining to religion. He stands alone, the sole and only Savior, toward whose efficacious mediation the grandest saints can add nothing either of counsel or of merit. To Him, therefore, and to Him alone, must we look for eternal life, and through Him must we strive for Heaven. So it also follows that faith in Him is the source of our divinest transports, and that He it is, dwelling in us the hope of glory, who unseals our eyes to see the wondrous things of His kingdom, and who discloses to our consciousness the marvelous splendors of our immortal nature. But faith is not the sole prerequisite to this gracious boon. The selfish, the worldly-minded never obtain it. We never have heard of those who are self-seeking, proud, vain and arrogant, doubting as to

whether they are in the body or out of the body, or ever feeling what I have so inadequately described. They may be Christians, but, being of the formal sort, they are strangers to the deeper and sweeter experiences of religion. These are conditioned on self-abnegation, and on that cross-bearing spirit of which the Master spoke just before He sought the mountain's solitude. We must be emptied of self, must realize our nothingness, be swallowed up and lost in Christ, if we would ascend the sunlit ranges. There is an Eastern fable given by Hunt from Jelaleddin which beautifully expresses this idea. "One knocked at the Beloved's door; and a voice asked from within, 'Who is there?' And he answered, 'It is I.' Then the voice said, 'This house will not hold me and thee.' And the door was not opened. Then went the lover into the desert, and fasted and prayed in solitude. And after a year he returned and knocked again at the door. And again the voice asked, 'Who is there?' And he said, '*It is thyself!*' And the door was opened to him." Thus may we go to Christ, proudly saying, "Let *me* into thy favor; it is *I*." He will not, however, open unto us. But if we overcome this haughty spirit, and if we make Him the foundation of our hope, and if we submit our will to His, so that we have no will of our own, and if we can exclaim with Paul, "I live, yet not I, it is Christ that liveth in me," then when we appeal for entrance we shall say, "It is Thyself;" and, hearing this, He will not only open wide the doors, but He will lead us to that high throne in the palace of his love where coronation robes await the soul, and where it shall be in some solemn hour transfigured, as it shall be finally in the Paradise above.

XVI.

THE TENDERNESS OF JESUS.

He beheld the city, and wept over it.—*Luke xix, 41.*

THERE is no city in the world to which devout people turn with so much of interest and with such deep emotions as to Jerusalem. The antiquity of its origin, almost venerable enough to be mythical; the course of its history, sufficiently religious to be sacred; and the multiplicity and variety of its misfortunes, sufficiently tragical to be appalling, arouse serious reflections, kindle pathetic fancies, and inspire profound awe. There doubtless was the earliest Salem founded; there probably the mystical Melchizedek worshipped; there the Jebusites held sway and intrenched themselves against the armies of Israel; there Abraham prepared to offer up his son; there Solomon reared the temple of the living God; there Babylon pursued its ruthless conquests; there Persia performed the good Samaritan's healing work; there Alexander rendered homage to the supremacy of Jehovah; there Egypt asserted its hated rule; there Antiochus slaughtered the people; there Pompey triumphed; there Crassus plundered; and there Herod tyrannized. But these are not the events which most powerfully affect the imagination and the sensibilities when we meditate on Jerusalem. They exert, it is true, a certain degree of influence; but it is the thought that Jesus of Nazareth was borne as a babe to its majestic temple, disputed as a boy in its rabbinical schools, wrought His mighty deeds and spoke His mightier words in its streets, mingled familiarly with its throngs, rebuked sternly

its haughty officials, suffered many indignities at its hands, and yet wept compassionately over its sins and sorrows, that appeals so irresistibly to head and heart.

When our Lord said to the daughters of this venerable city, as they accompanied Him with streaming eyes to the place of crucifixion, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves," He revealed the real fountain of that grief which tinged and shaded His ministry on earth. Not for Himself did "the Man of Sorrows" shed a single tear. Never did He bewail His own sufferings and trials. "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth;" and if "His visage was so marred more than any man," it was not on His own account, but on account of others. Sympathy with the woes of those around Him filled His soul, and excluded every selfish consideration and feeling. That He should be thus disinterestedly tender was foretold by the prophets, and that their predictions were fulfilled we have abundant evidence in the Gospels. There He is represented as weeping at the grave of Lazarus, as taking upon Himself the cares of the family at Bethany, and as doing all that love could suggest or Divine power accomplish to heal its wounds. There we find Him manifesting the deepest concern for the future of His tempest-tossed disciples. He seeks to reclaim Peter by the compassionate reproach which He concentrates in a look; He tries to encourage the drooping spirits of His followers by the promise of the Comforter on earth and of many mansions in Heaven; and His heart goes out in sweet solicitude for His mother, even when He hangs wearily on the cross and the shadows of death are thickening about Him. While these instances fairly illustrate the character and the extent of His tenderness, there is one other which, to my mind, does so with equal distinctness and impressiveness. I allude to the exhibition of it recorded in the text. It is no more than could be reason-

ably expected that He should sympathize with the anguish and anxieties of His personal friends, His disciples and His mother, however exceptional may have been His entire oblivion to His own burdens; but that He should weep so publicly, and apparently so involuntarily, over Jerusalem, with the mass of whose people He could not have had very familiar intercourse, and with whose tastes, habits, and pursuits He had hardly anything in common, places this grace in a diviner light, and reminds us of what is diviner still—that He thus feels for the race at large.

There is something in all great cities that impresses the mind with indescribable melancholy. The experiences of De Quincey on entering London for the first time have been shared by persons whose susceptibilities were less acute than his. He says, “there one feels like a single wave in a total Atlantic—like one plant in a forest of America.” He adds that “no loneliness can be like that which weighs upon the heart in the center of faces never ending, without voice or utterance for him, and among hurrying figures of men weaving to and fro, seeming like a mask of maniacs or a pageant of phantoms.” But it is not alone this sense of isolation that produces the undefinable melancholy which seizes on us on entering these huge centers of human life. There blend with it thoughts of the toil and peril, the cares and disappointments, the hopeless hopefulness and the cheerless cheerfulness of the vast throngs that swirl around us and sweep by us, like maddened waters, eddying fiercely and then hastening to the quiet of an ocean grave. A city is made up of extremes and exaggerations. There we confront the extremes of affluence and poverty, of learning and of ignorance, of civilization and barbarism, as they are met nowhere else; and there we find folly and fashion, mirth and amusement, crime and oppression on an enlarged scale, overgrown and overwhelmingly gigantic. Their proportions are so excessive as to become vague;

and the imagination is stimulated by the huge mystery that hangs around everything, and so intensifies the various features of the scene that they are rendered sadder and more forbidding. Never can I forget the feelings I experienced when, after years of absence, I returned to London, and from the upper windows of the lofty Charing Cross Hotel looked over the city at night. It was late, and little could be seen but the spectral outlines of buildings and the twinkle and flicker of innumerable lights. But the air was heavy with what seemed to be a suppressed groan, an unending sigh, as though the heart of the great metropolis was burdened beyond endurance, and was wailing to the darkness the story of its anguish. The sound was like the muffled monotonous moaning of the ocean after the fury of the tempest is spent, and the tormented billows are vainly seeking repose. It was like the dirge of the wind, sweeping through the pine forests, and lamenting the departure of summer. Throughout the night it seemed to continue, and, though during the day it was drowned in the roar and crash of commerce, its echo still lingered, and with the return of evening it distinctly rose again. When I heard it, tears came unbidden to my eyes. I stood mute and appalled as in the presence of some unparalleled grief, and as expecting to see emerging from the surrounding gloom some gigantic form, whose furrowed brow and sunken cheeks would add to the solemnity of the hour. Such feelings cannot be entirely strange to anyone who has in solitude and at night entered a great city. They are not, however, frequently indulged in the day, or when surrounded by rejoicing friends. Sunlight and pleasant company are not favorable to them; and it, therefore, marks their unusual intensity in Jesus, when as He approaches Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, bathed in the brightness of an eastern morning and encompassed

by loving friends, that He should at the sight of its gleaming towers give way to tears.

This expression of our Lord's tenderness I desire to consider, that His amiability may be duly recognized, and that an important but neglected Christian duty may be illustrated. In confining my reflections to the instance before us, I do not mean to intimate that He fails to sympathize with individuals and the race. We all know that it is far otherwise. But time would not serve to look at the subject in all of its bearings; and, therefore, for this reason, and for others that will appear, I prefer to view it exclusively in connection with those growing and busy communities whose moral and social condition is exciting in our day most serious solicitude.

Undoubtedly the wickedness of Jerusalem aroused our Lord's commiseration. His indictment against the city is terrible. He accuses it of cruelty, ingratitude, and insincerity. These are grave charges; but that they were well founded no one can truthfully deny. For pretense long prayers were made; intolerable burdens were imposed on the poor, and prophets and deliverers were crucified and stoned. Alas! Jerusalem in these and other respects is only a too faithful picture of what every great community has been from the time when the red hands of a murderer laid the foundations of the first city that was ever built. They have all been hotbeds of vice, the abodes of villainy, the refuges of crime, and the foul lair of every kind of human beast. When I speak thus I am not unmindful of their glorious achievements and of their deserved renown. To them art, science, literature, and even religion are indebted beyond the possibility of calculation. What the world owes Athens, Rome, Alexandria, Paris, and London, perhaps can never be adequately estimated. Obliterate what the first contributed to the refinement and culture of all ages, and what the others contributed to their govern-

ment, enlightenment, affluence, and civilization, and we should to-day be in a condition of semi-barbarism. Without in the least depreciating the value of the country, and recognizing the fact that it has rendered invaluable services to the cause of human progress, it must still be confessed that in aggressive leadership, and in far-sighted and expansive enterprise it has never approached either ancient or modern cities. Nor is it unnatural that this should be the case. In rural districts, in quiet villages, the stimulus is lacking to gigantic undertakings, and the means for their prosecution are absent. But where men congregate in vast bodies, and where the competition is intense, thought and energy are quickened, and the wealth is rapidly accumulated which is indispensable to the cultivation of higher education and art. Yet it should not be forgotten that the superior advantages of cities become the occasion, if not the cause, of their moral deterioration, and ultimately of their decline.

Refinement exposes the people to enervation, and luxury to prodigality and dissipation. The struggle for money and social distinction begets in multitudes of cases indifference to right; and the ardor of business pursuits creates a thirst for exciting pleasures which are fatal to stern ideas of duty. Hence the vigor of degrading amusements in cities ancient and modern. Among the former the amphitheater, with its cruel exhibitions, in which blood was shed like water; and among the latter, the immodest drama in which purity is outraged and trampled in the mire: the songs of Anacreon and the orgies of Bacchus in the first; and in the other, the obscene doggerel of rhymish nonentities, and the poison swill in which thousands find drunken oblivion. And in them all, the den of the gambler, the pandemonium of the prostitute, and the myriad temptations which allure the unsuspecting to ruin. Other evils develop in cities out of the regard, correct in itself, which

prevails for due observances of proprieties and for the irreproachableness of reputations, which to some extent is a man's capital in trade. Therefrom springs a sad degree of insincerity, and every relation of life becomes invested with a thin veil of hypocrisy. Hollowness and deceitfulness characterize society, dissembling and double-dealing disfigure commerce, and cant, pretension, and downright simulation deface and degrade religion. On all sides we know not whom to trust, and yet all are sleek, plausible, and eminently respectable. Verily, such a spectacle may well excite commiseration! No wonder that the Son of God wept over a state of things like this in Jerusalem! Reason enough undoubtedly for condemnation, and the condemnation He did not hesitate to pronounce; but greater reason still for tears that man should so defile himself, and should so war against his own glory. Censure unquestionably has her place, but pity likewise has hers. We may denounce within certain narrow bounds, but our grief should be without shore and limit. Well may we bewail what we see and hear; for only as we do so will we be moved to stretch forth strong and holy hands to help and save. Unmitigated severity never begets philanthropy. The haughty Pharisee judged without mercy, and wrapping his garments closely round his sacred person to escape pollution, he turned self-complacently away. But Jesus of Nazareth wept, and weeping went down into the city and sought to gather the people to His grace, as the hen gathereth her brood under her protecting wing. And just in proportion as we feel like Him, will we imitate His example, and seek at any and every cost to rescue the city of our habitation from the foul stain and shame of sin.

The wretchedness of Jerusalem, as well as its wickedness, must also have appealed to the Savior's tender heart. Wherever He looked He found unhappiness. The upper classes were discontented and embittered, while the lower

ones were sullen and hopeless. A foreign yoke galled the necks of the people, and a prolonged moan wailed audibly through the streets. Life and property were insecure. The will of the Idumean tyrant at any moment might destroy the first and confiscate the second. Jealousies, suspicions, filled the city with alarming rumors and fierce debates. Poverty added its horrors, and disease its terrors to the scene of misery; and it was further increased by repeated acts of violence and crime. Jerusalem is not alone in her sorrow. Whoever has studied the histories of Babylon, of Athens and of Rome has discovered, back of the pageants, processions, games and festivals, a heart burdened with care and wrung with anguish. And the same is true of modern cities. To a stranger from the country what can be more suggestive of pleasure and happiness than the gay throngs, the glittering saloons, the attractive theaters, the stately buildings, and the brilliant illuminations of such great centers of population as London, Paris, New York and Chicago? And yet these are the abodes of human wretchedness in its worst and most appalling forms. There thousands of children, who have never known childhood, and who are prematurely old, are heartlessly abandoned by other thousands of Christian people to starvation, suffering and crime. There young girls are systematically betrayed into worse than slavery, and their happiness oftentimes blighted by those who should be their protectors. It is an open secret that female virtue is not safe even in some reputable establishments, and that the perils which environ it are numerous and varied. The misery springing from this source is incalculable. Intemperance also increases the general woe. This malediction multiplies its victims wherever tumultuous crowds assemble, whether on the Thames, the Hudson, or the Lakes. And for every red-nosed, swollen-eyed, thick-tongued, staggering, maudlin creature there are

homes he has impoverished, hearts he has broken, and lives he has rendered unspeakably forlorn and disconsolate. No tyrant that ever ruled Jerusalem—not even the worst of the Herods—ever caused so many unoffending people to suffer as drunkenness. The atrocities of the Roman Nero and Caligula pale before its ruthless ravages and monstrous iniquities. It tramples on the loving heart of motherhood, tortures the sensibilities of wifehood, and, like another Herod, slaughters the innocents, only with a devilish ingenuity and malignity to which that infamous monarch was a stranger. Poverty, likewise, is more dense and dire in cities than elsewhere, and spreads its somber, leaden clouds over the sky of hope and peace. It breeds fretfulness and discontent, strife and wrangling, bitterness and despair, squalor and shame. The physical pangs it inflicts are not merely the extremes of hunger, nakedness and exposure, but, in addition, the languor, the feebleness, the lassitude engendered by unwholesome and innutritious diet and insufficient protection from the weather's violence. Nor are the affluent or the well-to-do in a state of absolute felicity. Living in communities where the greed for gain is never satisfied, where the freebooter's maxim, everything lawful to win success, prevails, constant apprehension, uncertainty, restlessness and nervousness necessarily follow. And thus among all ranks and conditions of society wretchedness holds its gloomy court. The men and women that jostle each other on the street, who smile so pleasantly and chat so lightly, and who seem to skim with bird-like wing so joyfully from fragrant bush to fruitful tree, have somewhere hidden in their soul a grave, whose sleeping tenant, be it a secret sin or nameless grief, they fear will one day rise ghastly and grim to drown with its mocking voice their simulated happiness.

Jesus wept! He saw through the shams and complicated disguises by which Jerusalem tried to veil its sor-

row, and He wept. Its anguish He felt more keenly than His own. But He knew that tears alone, even from a fount as holy as His heart, would not, and could not abate a grief so widespread; for they could not eradicate its cause. Who can hope by rains to dry up the Mississippi's mighty volume of waters? The floods of Heaven only increase the floods of earth; and weeping only increases weeping. The majestic river I have named that sweeps through so many states and at times overflows its banks, carrying misery to multitudes of homes, has its source embosomed in obscurity and must there be checked, if arrested at all. So the human sorrow that deluges the sunny plains and desolates the fruitful fields can be traced to one source—sin. Follow it backward along its tortuous windings and you will find it originating in transgression; and the only way to stay its course is to dry up its spring. This Jesus realized. He was no mere reformer, no levee-builder, no constructor of earthen works to channel anguish and keep it within due bounds. He knew the fatuity of such measures. The reform of social evils might do something toward the relief of human woe; but He acted on the principle that, if sin could be subdued, the woe and the evil would both be cured. Hence, while He wept He labored. He stands not weeping on Olivet's hill, but goes down into the city, calls the people to repentance, preaches to them heart-renewal, and invites them to rest in Him and live. Similar must be our course if our cities are ever to be the habitations of peace and sweet content. Picture-galleries, art-museums, libraries, and clubs are all useful in their place; but Chicago, like Jerusalem, needs the Gospel—the Gospel carried to every home and pressed on every conscience, more than these. Heine tells us that when sick he entered the Louvre and sat at the feet of Venus of Milo. He remarks that she appeared to sympathize with him, but that she also seemed

to say, "You see I have no arms, I cannot help you." And Art, like this supreme triumph of art, is impotent to morally renovate and cleanse. Something is needed that not only has arms, but a heart as well, to succor the transgressor, and to lift him out of his pollution and despair. The eternal truth of God, preached by a church in earnest is worth more to the cause of social salvation than all the works of Phidias or the creations of Mozart. But whatever means are employed, it will certainly avail nothing to wring one's hands and bewail the deplorable condition of things, as though sighs and groans could drive away the enemy which has fastened like a vampire on the life of society. Believe me, it is cheap sympathy to bemoan the sorrows of the city while nothing practical is done to heal them. If we would alleviate them we must leave our high places, where we mourn at ease and possibly take great credit to ourselves for doing so, and grapple with the sin, and seek through the might of the Gospel to effect its final overthrow.

But Jerusalem was not only wicked and wretched, it was willful; and its willfulness evidently increased our Lord's commiseration. Hear his own pathetic words: "How often would I have gathered thy children * * * and ye would not. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." O Jerusalem! thou wouldst not, is the burden of His lamentation. She who had stoned the prophets, and who had pursued a headstrong, rebellious course, was obstinately blind to her opportunity, and remained self-willed to the last. He was moved to tears; for He foresaw where this would end. The future was unlocked and opened to His saddened eyes, and, oblivious to His own surroundings, He saw the tragic situation of the city in the coming years and its cloudy destiny. The dark frontiers of a desert stormy

land rose vaguely on His vision through the mists of time, and He beheld the "haughty city with its thousand towers," swept as it were by the breath of the sirocco and buried in the scorching sands. From this dreary doom it might have been saved, but it would not. The stubbornness that rejected Christ seemed to drive Jerusalem from one blunder to another; until, having brought upon itself the great siege, parties arose, each led by stubborn zealots intent on executing his own designs, and willfulness became a mania, terminating in exterminating desolation. As fell Jerusalem so fell the other great cities of the past whose ruins and the records of whose achievements alone survive to attest their ancient splendor. They perversely rejected their advantages, were indifferent to their perils, and persistently drove madly to their overthrow. Remember the fall of Babylon. Haughty presumption, leading to revelry, removed the obstructions from the path of invading Persia. Read the accounts of Athenian decline, and take as a commentary the orations of Demosthenes. What do you learn? Is it not that self-will proved the ruin of that famous people? They would not believe that Philip cherished hostile intentions toward them, and even closed their eyes to the multiplied evidences of his enmity, and thus stupidly betrayed themselves. And thus, likewise, did Rome destroy itself; and thus every city that has passed away wrought its own overthrow; and thus the destiny of those that survive will be decided by themselves. Should we not weep, then, when we find them intent on rejecting Christ, recklessly putting away from them that which renews the moral foundations of society, heals its sorrows, and so ministers to its security? To His tears Christ added remonstrances and warnings; but there His power ended. He could do no more. Virtue, faith, cannot be coerced. Whosoever, communities or men, would live nobly must choose freely. We may

exhort, rebuke, warn, and we should do so tenderly, lovingly. We should also point out the path of safety and try to win our fellow-citizens to it. But here our responsibility and our ability cease. We cannot cope with unreasoning, arrogant, and scornful willfulness. When that doggedly and stubbornly plants itself in the path of Mercy and impedes her progress, tears and sympathy, and heartrending anguish are all in vain.

O City of the Lakes! * thou wondrous creation of a few fleeting years, whose name is already famous throughout the earth for indomitable energy and resistless enterprise, thy Savior weeps over thee as He wept over Jerusalem. He knows thy sorrows and thy sins, and He would heal the one and save thee from the other. He would have thee a city as royal in purity and integrity as in commercial vigor and activity. Hence, He calls on thee "now, in the days of thy youth," to accept the Gospel, to sanctify the Sabbath, and renew the heart. He would have thee realize that now is thine opportunity. What thou dost make thyself to-day, thou shalt be, and must be, hereafter. This is thy formative period; thou art now taking on thyself an enduring character. In a few more years it will be fixed irreversibly; and thou wilt be for all time to come either Atheistic or Godly, Infidel or Christian. Which? That is the solemn issue thou alone canst decide. He lingers yet to hear thy decision; still does He plead with thee, knocking at thy doors, O city! by every sermon that is preached, by every Christian deed performed. A little while He lingers at thy threshold, pleads that He may enter in and dwell with thee, and offers thee that which can make thee the joy and beauty of the earth. Turn not, I pray thee, a deaf ear to His entreaties, say not, as did Jerusalem of old, "His blood be on us and on our children;" for then will He turn from thee, and leave thee

* Chicago, where this discourse was spoken.

with His blood-marks on thee, to thy brief career of inglorious worldliness and ignoble prosperity.

“ But all night long that voice spoke urgently :

‘ Open to me.’

Still harping in mine ears :

‘ Rise ; let me in.’

Pleading with tears :

‘ Open to me that may I come to thee.’

While the dew dropped ; while the dark hours were cold :

‘ My feet bleed ; see my face ;

See my hands bleed that bring thee grace.

My heart bleeds for thee.

Open to me.’

So till the break of day,

Then died away

That voice in silence, as of sorrow.

Then footsteps echoing like a sigh

Passed me by —

Lingering footsteps, slow to pass.

On the morrow

I saw upon the grass

Each footprint marked in blood ; and on my door

The mark of blood forevermore.”

XVII.

THE TRUTH-SPIRIT OF JESUS.

“When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.” — *John xvi, 13.*

ROBERT BROWNING writes, —

“Truth is truth in each degree,
Thunder-pealed by God to nature, whispered by my soul to me.”

But there are degrees disclosed through another method by the Author and Source of Light. The Comforter is to guide into all — not into partial, but into “all truth”; and hence He is called the Comforter, for man can never be permanently helped by a lie, however venerable, or by an illusion, however beautiful and poetic. It is this sublime function, also, that renders the mystery of the Trinity credible, and that disposes untold multitudes of devout souls to confess with Athanasius: “*Ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in Unitate vereremur,*” for only God Himself can compass the shoreless boundaries of the “all truth” and impart of its fullness to His creatures.

The Great Teacher, whose lips never slandered, characterized the author of evil as a liar and the father of lies, and in doing so implied that deceit and falsehood are responsible for the malignity, mischief and misery that have darkened the earth. “Thou shalt not surely die” was the primary glittering illusion which betrayed our progenitors into wrongdoing and death; and similar beguiling fabrications have fostered vice and crime, have disturbed the peace of families,

and have cursed society with endless cheats and counterfeits. So it has come to pass that subservience to untruth, or conscious toleration of anything approaching to untruth, is inconsistent with the Divine image in the soul, while absolute unvaraciousness is synonymous with spiritual death.

To deliver mankind from such thralldom is the preordained mission of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ prayed the Father to send, and who has come to abide forever with His people. (*John xiv, 16, 17.*) In pondering our Lord's promise, fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and being continuously fulfilled, it should not be overlooked that the spiritual community received the Comforter at the beginning, and that still, mainly if not exclusively, His gracious ministry is carried on among its members and through their instrumentality. Cardinal Newman, in his earlier years, was not far wrong when he eloquently maintained the teaching vocation of the Church. To the Church unquestionably at the first the faith was committed, and in her through all the ages the illuminating Spirit has dwelt—His presence and inspiration being indeed absolutely indispensable to her standing as a Church—that she might be taught of God and in her turn be able to teach the world. But beyond Dr. Newman's primary premise we cannot go with him. He argues from a Church empowered to instruct mankind to the authority of councils, to a priesthood practically inerrant, and to infallible pontiffs. Such conclusions Protestants must challenge. To the contrary, they will argue from the same postulate, that instead of councils there ought to be schools of sacred learning, instead of priesthoods an open Bible, and instead of Popes the Divine and unerring Comforter to guide preachers and people alike in the interpretation of the spiritual universe.

In the furtherance of this sublime mission the Truth-Spirit creates in the Church the passion for truth. And there is need for it in such a world as this. Near Buzzard's Bay, in

Massachusetts, there grows a weed called "tussock," — a term declared obsolete by the dictionary, though, unhappily, the thing itself is not obsolete in the fields. It is the peculiarity of this worthless plant that its roots are incomparably more extensive than its leaves, and that it unfits the soil for more wholesome seeds. Error in the mind is not unlike this idle and pestiferous tussock. Once it has secured a hold, it clings with the tenacity of despair, and chokes every other growth; and it does seem to get this hold on every unregenerate creature. The Bible speaks of the vast heathen world "that changed the truth of God into a lie," and of those "who believed a lie that they might be damned." And I do not misrepresent the race when I affirm that it has an affinity for deceptions, and follows greedily after phantoms. Not a few persons, while insisting on the value of veracity, seem incapable of appreciating the worth of correct and accurate beliefs in religion. Some individuals even go so far as to deny the possibility of knowing anything regarding the origin, the order, or the outcome of the universe. Others have come to exalt liberality above conviction; and to be tolerant of all opinions, however erroneous, is more loudly applauded in our day than is the conscientious loyalty of those who cannot bring themselves to call black white or wrong right. The Agnostic declares that we cannot know, and the apathetic crowd smiles sadly or inanely, and exclaims, "We really do not care to know!" And Renan gives almost poetic expression to this indifference, and reconciles us in no small degree to the poison of his speech by its exquisite beauty. He wrote not long before his death: "Nothing is to be gained by importuning truth, by soliciting her day by day. She is deaf and cold; our ardent cries do not reach her." . . . "The new philosophy! The newer philosophy! The newest philosophy! *Mon Dieu!* why should we dispute about the priority of error? Learn to wait! Perhaps there is nothing at the end. Or who knows

if perchance the truth be not sad? Do not let us be in such a hurry to know it." As we muse on the French Orientalist's despair, the lines from Tennyson return to us: —

" We had read their know-nothing books and we lean'd to the darker side —

Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps, perhaps, if we died, if we died?

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,
If every man die forever, if all his griefs are in vain? "

Alas! alas! for the tussock weed in the soul. Where shall the plow be found to lacerate the roots, and to upturn the plant to the death-dealing power of light? Already has the question been answered. Only the Comforter can do this work, can comfort the heart with healing wounds and enrich it by emptying its fields of impoverishing growths. John (*1 John v, 6*), referring to Him, writes, "The Spirit is truth," just as he also declares, "God is love." Veraciousness is the very essence of His being; and as like produces like, as aroma imparts aroma, and as fire communicates heat, so He Who is essentially *Truth* calls forth truthfulness wherever His influences are experienced. Paul, speaking for other Christians as well as for himself, says, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"; and it is also affirmed of them that they have been made free by the truth, and that they have come to the knowledge of the truth. What other language is necessary to portray the beginnings and the reality of a passion that comes to dominate the entire being? This passion is the distinctive glory of the Church of Christ. Whatever she has wrought, whatever doctrine she has proclaimed, has been inspired and undertaken through this insatiable love of truth. She has, unhappily, been split into denominations; but even this evil has been measurably atoned for by the consideration that each sect has been striving to the utmost to avoid heresy. A divided Christendom is proof

of the importance which the children of God attach to intellectual honesty.

Similar evidence is furnished by the conservatives who cling to the very form of belief as it has descended from the Fathers, and by the radicals who are dissatisfied with the definitions of former times. The one party defends ancient creeds and the other assails them for the self-same reason; and though we may deplore their differences we may be allowed to rejoice in their zeal for the common cause of truth. There is no small deviation by the nautilus from the life and habits of the snail. They both have shells; but there the resemblance ends. The snail carries his covering wherever he goes, and though occasionally he reaches out from it, he speedily withdraws again to its narrow and unyielding chambers. But the nautilus resides in the external mouth of his shell, and is continually moving from old to new as fresh growths are multiplied. For he is constantly building additional rooms of the purest mother-of-pearl, and while he keeps ever on the threshold of the latest creation, he never ceases to have communication by a kind of pneumatic tube with the earliest. In the same way there are two types of believers. There are those who do not recognize the possibility of expansion or enlargement, and who, if they for a moment contemplate the opportunities of progress, draw back, snail-like, alarmed at their own temerity. But on the other hand, there are those who are ever advancing. As the nautilus increases its beautiful shell, ever living at its entrance, so these growing disciples are continually enlarging their creeds, still being in themselves ahead of them in spiritual character. But both in their different ways are devoted to the integrity of their house, which is at once their refuge and their creation. Of course, on either side there may be certain individuals who are uninfluenced by love of truth. Some persons may cling to orthodoxy as an inheritance and not because of its trustworthiness; and others may

be greedy of heterodoxy because of their impression that the latest novelty must possess superior claims to attention. The former temper would have effectually prevented the Reformation and the rise of Nonconformity, and the latter would never permit anything to remain "on earth unwrenched and firm." Northern lights never ripened a harvest, and the scorching noon-day sun perpetually shining would speedily wither any that might assay to grow. Lukewarm interest in the true by the extreme conservative evangelical may prove as fatal as the torrid heat of the reckless aggressionists. I am, however, persuaded that cases such as these are comparatively rare. As a whole the Church is influenced by the passion we have contemplated, is intolerant of a lie even in her own life, and will assail it though the attack jeopardize her own existence. Were she under the control of the world-spirit, we should hear nothing of higher criticism, of creed revision, and doctrinal restatement. Better, far better, and more honorable, her irrepressible determination to examine and verify, than a supercilious disdain of all questionings as to the validity of her claims and the soundness of her theology.

In addition to this gracious work, the Truth-Spirit directs the Church to the possession of truth. Why, then, are there warring sects? Perhaps a sufficient answer is furnished by the fact that the Comforter ever operates along the line of human faculties and never supersedes them. Never has a Heavenly communication been so given as to render superfluous thought and inquiry. The Guide is infallible, but the creature is not. Remember that even the Son of God had to become Son of Man that celestial ideas might be formulated by terrestrial lips. The Almighty never does for the creature what the creature can do for himself, and in extending succor He never sets at naught and discredits the laws He has made. Forgetting this, or never realizing it, men and women have frequently supposed that knowledge could be, and would be, imparted to them without any effort of

their own. Professing the right of private judgment, they have been too indolent to exercise it, and have supposed that no obligation rests on them to receive Divine teachings unless they are fully authenticated to their reason, without entailing on them the labor of investigation. It may assist us to appreciate the part human thought plays in the ministry of the Comforter, and the necessity that exists for its wise and discriminating exercise, if we consider in what ways He guides the Church into all truth.

He does so apparently by quickening the memory. Jesus declared that He would bring to the remembrance of the disciples whatsoever He had Himself spoken (*John xiv, 26*). During His life they were slow of heart to understand, and when death came it seemed as though His gracious messages were entirely bereft of meaning. In their dismay and confusion His followers forgot the promise of a resurrection, and of other events as precious as they were startling. But the forsaken tomb and the wonders of Pentecost revived the words they had heard from His lips in many delightful interviews. The past came back, and shone in a new light, in the light of Christ's victory over death and of the tongues of flame that inaugurated the spiritual epoch. But had these disciples never been associated with Him during His brief ministry, the sights and sounds of the Pentecostal season would have been as inexplicable to them as they were to the multitudes, who were more alarmed and bewildered than instructed by what they saw and heard. Memory could not recall what it had never treasured. And it still holds good that knowledge must be acquired, and in the nature of things must be stored away by personal application and diligence before it can be summoned by an emergency for service. The Spirit of God, I am persuaded, still energizes memory. But He can no more bring to the surface what has not been previously written there, than heat can restore characters supposed to have been traced in so-called invisible ink if

they were never drawn. This fact is frequently overlooked. The Bible is not studied and committed to heart, and an indefinite expectation is indulged that somehow its contents will be miraculously communicated, and then wonder is expressed that Christendom is divided, and that the saints do not see eye to eye. Be reasonable. You cannot be excused from coöperation in the work of your own enlightenment. If you do not bury the Scriptures in your soul, however fiercely you may pray, you will remain in ignorance of them forever, and never can their gracious promises be summoned from the depths by the Comforter for your consolation in the hour of tribulation.

Again the Spirit facilitates the acquisition of truth by disclosing its infallible test and criterion. (*John xvi, 13-15.*) Our Lord declared that when He should come He would not speak of Himself but of Him; that is, He would continually and exclusively show the things of Christ and glorify the Christ. There is a cartoon designed for the French Pantheon called "The Staircase of Voltaire." The great skeptic is represented as standing on the top, while the various philosophers of the age are set forth as ascending and descending. D'Alembert is accepting an article from his hand for the *Encyclopædia*, and other writers are coming and going with contributions, as though anxious for his approval. The purpose of the painter is evidently to express the thought that Voltaire embodied the genius of the eighteenth century, and that the conformity of others to his standard in reality determined their faithfulness to its spirit. There is a ladder referred to in the Scriptures (*John i, 51*) on which angels are ascending and descending. That mysterious ladder is Christ, and by Him all aspirations rise to the Father, and all blessings flow down to us. There, likewise, should our conceptions and interpretations of truth be brought for verification. If they harmonize with Him, if they glorify Him, if they freely rise to the height of His

Divinity and as freely reach to the depth of His humanity, and tend to unite earth and Heaven through Him, we may rest assured, though their form may be crude, their substance is essentially correct. My brother, does your doctrine magnify or belittle the Christ? Does it make you more than you ought to be and Him less than it is possible for Him to be? The Spirit glorified Him; whom do you glorify? If it should be yourself — alas! — or your Church, or anything short of Him, you can hardly fail to be a disturbing and dividing element in Christendom, neutralizing by your vanity the ministry of your infallible Guide. When you “have taken the stars from the night and the sun from the day,” what can keep you clear from the track of error? In such case all your pretence of enlarged thought and lofty flights of self-inflated imagination deserves to be characterized in the scathing words of Browning, —

“No nearer something, by a jot
Rise an infinity of nothings
Than one.”

But if you shall exalt the Savior, if you shall aim to know Him and to magnify Him, you will not drift into serious heresy nor multiply schisms; for if half a dozen or more ships steer for one light that flashes from the shore, they will not miss their course and they will draw closer to one another.

When these conditions are observed, it will be found that the Spirit further directs by illuminating the truth. As He took the things of Christ and showed them, made them plain and clear, to the disciples, so He still operates to unfold and make transparent. (*1 Cor. ii, 9, 16.*) While we have no right to look for spiritual communications contrary to and subversive of the Scriptures, neither ought we to assume that God has ceased to speak to His Church. The channel of communication between Him and the soul has surely not been blocked by a book, even though it be THE

BOOK. In our serener moods have we not enjoyed visions of transcendent beauty, and gained an insight into the nature and work of Christ hardly translatable into our poor speech? The darkness that has rested on some passage, like clouds mantling a mountain summit, has by a breath from the Unseen been suddenly dispelled. I have seen a contemptible meagre hill hide entirely a lofty peak, and in the same way a less important truth has often effectually obscured one towering above it in spiritual significance. A change of position or different point of observation will disclose the mountain, and an alteration in our mental mood will determine the right proportions of various doctrines. This disposition of the mind, when the mind is docile and receptive, proceeds from the Spirit; and He it is also who so influences thought that beneath the clang of warring creeds, and under the strident cries of agony in the suffering world, there comes to be recognized an undertone of harmony and unity. And when we are thus influenced we too can sing with Ernest Meyer to the weary-hearted and discouraged:—

“O longing list’ner on the stormy shore,
Are they so harsh, the sounds that round thee roar?
A little while thy disentangled ear
Amid the tuneless din shall hear
An under streaming subtle symphony,
A mystic maze of ordered melody.”

There remains a final aspect of this mission to be considered. The Comforter seeks through the Church to promote the progress of truth.

This is a favorite phrase in our times, and has come to be almost the shibboleth of a party. Master John Robinson assured the pilgrims that fresh light would break forth from God’s Word: “For it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-Christian darkness, and the full perfection of knowledge break forth

at once." We cannot suppose that Calvin or the Synod of Dort were competent when scarce emerged from Babylon the Great to speak the final word for the doctrinal guidance of the Church. Nor can we admit, religion being so infinite a quantity, that the centuries have exhausted its meaning. Toiling time has not yet wrought out all of its deep significance either into ultimate dogma or deed. But we must be careful not to press the idea of progress too far, even, as in some cases it is done, to the length of absurdity. Perhaps in no other connection is the phrase used as immorally as it is in relation to Christian belief. Frequently it is employed when men are breaking entirely away from orthodoxy and desire still to be numbered among its friends. The inspiration of the Bible, the vicariousness of Christ's sacrifice, and the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul are put aside as antiquated and obsolete; and if the forms of speech that describe these doctrines are preserved, we soon come to learn that it is in condescension to our prejudices, and that something radically different is meant from what the language really means. The *penseur temeraire* carries on his bold fight against Evangelical religion in the uniform and under the colors of that religion. I will not discuss with him the chivalry and honesty of his methods; but to warn others of the snare laid for them by the abuse of terms that would make out the decay of a plant to be its growth, and midnight to be the dawning of day, I will, in a few words, set forth the only fair application of the word "progress" to Christian truth.

It may signify the emancipation of truth. Sometimes it is held in practical bondage. The Word of God ought not to be bound; but frequently it is, nevertheless. Often it is held captive by our greed and our indolence. It ought to be sent out and be free to bless the nations; but in many instances the missionary spirit is dead. We may prate in our pulpits of "our advanced views," meaning in fact our gospelless

doctrines, which in the eyes of the Divine Christ may simply stand for advanced delusions. Rest assured, work goes farther with Him than such views, — and really the world is more in need of the former than the latter. But, beyond this, emancipation denotes the separation of truth from encumbering error. Paul, thinking of a criminal bound to a corpse, cried out, “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The same cry might well be uttered by truth, for it is hardly ever found absolutely free from connection with some deadly heresy. Alas! the ages have bound it hand and foot to false theories and philosophies, and deliverance from the fatal union is the need of the hour. The mighty thoughts of Jesus have been imprisoned in iron cages of man’s devising, and to touch even the cage is counted by some alarmists presumptuous in the extreme. In my opinion the world would suffer little, if any, loss could these narrow houses of bondage be destroyed. Creeds and confessions, rigid articles of faith and formularies of belief are not as valuable as many suppose, and if they were all destroyed we should be compelled to find out the mind of the Spirit without their hindrance, and consequently we might be immensely the gainers by the change.

But progress lies not merely in the direction of liberty. It is found also in unfolding and enlarging. As the plant develops from the seed, and, in a sense, mathematics from the multiplication table, and the man from the child, so in all subjects of thought there is the possibility of indefinite expansion and advance. The so-called evolution that is in reality a process of grafting, by which a false doctrine is put in the place of the true, is misleading, and is no more to be countenanced than any other contradiction in terms. A navigator who should propose to discredit and repudiate the first principles of his art because he has added largely to his original stock of knowledge regarding the solar system would speedily be deposed from command of his ship. His style

of progress would invite swift disaster. But in dealing with the soul, teachers of religion at times claim to have grown wonderfully, when, in fact, they have not been following the truths they profess to teach from the germ to the flower, but have adopted an alien and entirely different species of plant. No one objects to an upward and onward march in theology, from the simple to the complex, and from primary to ultimate principles; but this endless chatter and pretense of progress, which means at most the revival of moss-grown heresies, — and that generally unsettles the faith of the weak and dims the hope of the timid “as the lake’s silver dulls with drifting clouds,” — is neither philosophical nor beneficial. The surface of the ocean has only been skimmed over as yet, and thought has merely dipped the tips of its pinions in the floods; then let us not count that development which would impatiently substitute a Sahara in its stead, where spiritual life must inevitably be parched and stifled. In the prevailing infatuation for novelty in doctrine we are in danger of overlooking the unfolding of truth that consists largely in its adaptation in practical forms to the needs of the age. The Comforter was “to show us things to come,” and I am sure I am not far wrong in claiming that He fulfills this part of His mission by showing us, with the varying changes of society, what principles or precepts are peculiarly appropriate to the times. I am satisfied that the interest now taken by the Church in the social question, and in the wrongs that are intertwined with our civilization, is of God. And it will be seen at last, through His guidance, that the Gospel is as fitted to this era as to others, and has a special message of light and love to all the struggling millions of earth.

I can conceive of only one other legitimate use of the word “progress” in relation to truth, and that has to do with its enthronement. The hour of its triumph is fast approaching. It shall reign, and not in the name of another, but in its own. Time has been, and is not altogether past, when the world

was invited to believe it on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, or on the authority of miracles. Something was exalted above truth, and considered as abundantly qualified to vouch for it and give it a character. While the infancy of peoples may have required some such arrangement, we are rapidly approaching the hour when truth will be self-evidencing and will demand attention, not because some woman of Samaria has borne testimony to its worth, but because the entire earth feels the beneficence of its teachings and the Divinity of its origin. The days of proving and arguing are hastening towards an end, and the age is drawing nigh when "no man shall say to his brother, Know thou the Lord; for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest"; and then shall the Truth-Spirit rejoice in the accomplishment of His mission, and Truth forever tabernacle with men. On this very point Browning writes wisely as well as poetically:—

"You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs
To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn,
And check the careless step would spoil their birth;
But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go,
Since should ye doubt of virtues, question kinds.
It is no longer for old twigs ye look,
Which proved once underneath lay store of seed,
But to the herb's self, by what light ye boast,
For what fruits' signs are. This book's fruit is plain,
Nor miracles need prove it any more.
Doth the fruit show? Then miracles bade 'ware
At first of root and stem, saved both till now
From trampling ox, rough boar, and wanton goat."

Then shall the veraciousness of doctrines be judged, not by their antiquity, nor by their commanding influence in ages past, but by their correspondence to the facts of the present, and by their ability to so interpret them as to promote the general welfare of humanity. It is no longer necessary to

cite the opinions of sages and philosophers, nor to invoke the authority of the Church to demonstrate the value of honesty and purity. Not only does the history of many centuries bear witness to their worth, but every community and individual who stops long enough to think will acknowledge that they have shown themselves from day to day to be indispensable to the good order and happiness of society. The same test will come inevitably to be applied to the profounder concepts of Christianity. For why should we adhere to the doctrine of atonement if it does not bring to the soul a consciousness of reconciliation with God? Why believe, or try to believe in the theory of supernatural renewal of man's spirit if it is not renewed, and why insist on "a scheme of salvation" if it manifestly does not save either from sin or sorrow? The time will come, when the world wearied with its endeavors to accept as credible what was credible to generations long since extinct, and because it was credible to them, will receive the great doctrines of our religion, probably purged from current crudities, on account of their recognized harmony with things as they are, and on account of their manifest and undeniable adaptation to the spiritual needs of the race. It will then be realized that they are as vitally necessary to the real interests of mankind as integrity or chastity, and they will speak to that new age in tones that will carry with them the proof of inherent and commanding right to be heard. Thus shall Truth come to her throne, and thus in the happier day shall she not only reign, but be gladly honored as the gracious queen whose "words are spirit and life."

This blessed hour may seem to many long delayed, and to give few signs of its approach. In some quarters there are even indications that intelligence revolts from subscription to Christian tenets. Not unfrequently do we now hear men exclaim with Faust, "I see that we can nothing know"; or hear them declare with Jacobi, "With the heart

I am a Christian, and a heathen with the understanding." We cannot deny this present trend toward agnosticism; but we cannot believe it to be more than a superficial and temporary drift. The discord between head and heart, referred to by the German philosopher, cannot prove to be permanent. It will come to an end. Man cannot continue divided in himself; and as he knows more, he will perceive that after all, his spiritual and emotional nature was nearer to the eternal soul of all things than his mere calculating reason. On this phase of religious doubt De Quincey writes with remarkable suggestiveness, when he says "that oftentimes, under a continual accession of light, important subjects grow more and more enigmatical." His meaning will be clearer, and the application of his thought to contemporaneous agnosticism be more apparent, if we quote him farther. He adds: "In times when nothing was explained, the student, torpid as his teacher, saw nothing which called for explanation, — all appeared one monotonous blank. But no sooner had an early twilight begun to solicit the creative faculties of the eye, than many dusky objects, with outlines imperfectly defined, began to converge the eye and to strengthen the nascent interest of the spectator. It is true that light in its final plenitude is calculated to disperse all darkness. But this effect belongs to its consummation. In its earlier and struggling states, light does but reveal darkness." And it is to this particular stage the inquiring and thoughtful world outside of the Church has attained. It is now neither day nor night. Formerly many things were believed without hesitancy, because there was not sufficient knowledge of the difficulties involved to occasion doubt. It is different in our times. The excessive intellectual splendor of our age makes plain the darkness that envelops the mighty doctrines of our faith; but the noon-tide hour has not yet arrived. We are at the point of transition. We know more than our fathers, and know

enough to see the difficulties in the way of revealed religion as they never could ; but we do not know enough to explain and remove them. Less light or more is fatal to agnosticism ; and the century is moving toward the more. And for its increase the Christian is bound to labor. It is his privilege to do so now, in seasons of skepticism and perplexity, when " the hearts of some are failing them for fear," and the lips of others are uttering reproaches against the Galilean and His Gospel. To be faithful and heroic in such days as these is worthy of honor ; for it not only secures to future ages the most precious of all heritages, but demonstrates the grandeur of unselfish and disinterested loyalty. I would rather uphold the Christian banner now, now that it trembles in the midst of the battle, than to follow it in the coming triumphal procession, when all men shall gladly do it homage.

" *Then* to side with truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit and 'tis prosperous to be just.
Then it is the brave man *chooses*, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.
Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes ; they were souls that stood
alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone ;
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design."

XVIII.

THE ANGUISH OF JESUS.

“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly ; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.”—*Luke xxi, 44.*

INCONGRUITIES meet us on every side, and at every turn in life. Battles rage over peaceful and fertile plains, hearts break amid the splendors of palaces, beggars starve in lands of plenty, sufferers languish beneath the cold complacent stars, flowers spring from and beautify the charnel house, and Christ agonizes in a garden with the broad, clear, Paschal moon gleaming serenely on Him. There seems to be a lack of fitness in these things ; the scenery does not correspond to the tragedy. We feel that war should be waged where nature is most drear and desolate, that sorrow should be identified with poverty and squalor, that anguish should lacerate the soul only when the sun is eclipsed in the heavens, and that Christ should weep His tears of blood in some waste, barren wilderness. But it is not so, and probably it is not that man may realize how little sympathy there may be between his surroundings and himself, and that he may learn to look for a Gethsemane in his fairest and sweetest garden.

From the quiet shelter of an upper chamber, from the refining influence of high discourse, and from the first eating of that sacred meal, which has been a sacrament of brotherhood to so many souls, Jesus and His disciples directed their steps toward the Fish gate, now known as St. Stephens,

that leads from Jerusalem to the valley of Jehoshaphat. They descended a narrow path, and crossed a bridge over the brook Kedron, a stream whose name derived probably from the sombre hue imparted to it by the thickly-grown forests through which it passed, signifies "blackness," and soon reached a retired spot near the foot of the Mount of Olives, called Gethsemane. This word, composed of two Hebrew terms denoting a "Valley of Fatness" or an "Olive Press," was applied to an enclosure beneath the shadow of Moriah, whose site cannot now be accurately determined. Tradition has indeed tried to localize it within the boundaries of a rude, broken wall, where grow eight venerable olive-trees, whose gnarled roots are beautified by little purple and crimson flowers. But the evidence adduced in favor of this particular spot is not conclusive, and the belief that it was here the Savior sweat great drops of blood may be as illusory as the sentimental legend that attributes the flowers to the crimson drops that bedewed the ground.

Knowing how imminent was the final conflict in which He must engage, realizing that the hour was near when the things prophesied of Him must be fulfilled, and conscious of the strain the struggle would impose on His spiritual strength, and on His disciples' faith, Jesus led His followers from the crowded city that He and they might in seclusion seek help from God. They reached the mount, before this often consecrated as an altar, and at the entrance to the garden Jesus left all who had accompanied Him, except Peter, James, and John, to pray that "they might not enter into temptation," that they might be so prepared for the coming trial as to resist its evil power. Taking with Him the three chosen ones who had witnessed His transfiguration, He passed the enclosure, and then withdrawing from them "a little farther," deeper into the solitude, He fell upon His face in prayer, while strange commotions agitated His soul. From the time that He left the supper-chamber darkness had evidently been thickening

round Him, literally a darkness that could be felt, and He acknowledged its density as He separated from the three disciples in the words, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," but when He was entirely alone it settled down upon Him, shut Him in, and it was night. Then occurred that mysterious struggle, that fathomless anguish, that appalling grief that bathed Him in blood, and that wrung from His sacred lips a cry almost of despair.

They who had seen the transfigured beauty of their Lord beheld as well the painful gloom that obscured for a time His glory; and may not we, we who have meditated often on His radiant, triumphant joy, contemplate with profit to ourselves His crushing and overwhelming agony? Do you recall the words of Mrs. Sigourney?

"Thou who hast power to look
Thus at Gethsemane, be still, be still!
What are thine insect woes compared with His
Who agonizeth there? Count thy brief pains
As the dust atom on life's chariot wheels,
And in a Savior's grief forget them all."

While this may be impossible, as it is no easy task to pluck up a rooted sorrow, yet the reverent study of our Savior in the garden may assist us to understand His sufferings and prepare us to endure our own. In these respects at least it cannot but be advantageous.

The Lord's condition in Gethsemane strikes us as most pitiable and wretched. His usual composure and quiet dignity have yielded to violent agitation and uncontrollable emotion. He is as a reed shaken by the storm, as a giant tree twisted and bent by the tempest, as a mighty wave writhing in the embrace of a cyclone, and as a peaceful vale rent, torn, and tossed through earthquake throes. His spiritual being is convulsed, is in a state of upheaval, and is caught in pangs and pains and in exhausting paroxysms. He is prostrated, mental and physical strength broken and

collapsed. A burden unbearable presses Him to the ground, a revelation of horror fills Him with amazement, and a sense of misery unendurable afflicts Him with dejection and fearful astonishment. The evangelists employ various forms of expression in chronicling and describing this mysterious cataclysm of spirit. Matthew writes, "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Mark adds, "He was sore amazed." Luke declares that "He was in an agony," and all of them represent Him as praying earnestly, while one of them records the Lord's own confession, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." This language is more vivid and forcible in the original than in our version. It denotes the most absolute and irresistible depression, joylessness, and dolefulness; a weariness, heaviness, and failure of heart, and a sense of helpless wretchedness bordering on hopeless desolation. Moreover, it implies astonishment and alarm, as though He stood in the presence of tragical calamities and catastrophes that suspended energy, paralyzed courage, stupefied thought, weakened faith, and exhausted all physical resources. "Even unto death" is an exclamation of awful significance, as though the body felt so keenly the piercing sorrow, was so strained by the violent commotion, so taxed by the ponderous weight, that it could not but succumb. Instinctively we recall the wailings of the psalmist as we catch the echo of our Savior's plaint: "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." "I am consumed by the blow of thine hand." "My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." And yet there are reasons for believing that even David's anguish is not comparable to that which our Lord endured, that He is as supreme in grief as in glory, and that His pathetic claim, "There is no sorrow like unto My sorrow," may pass unchallenged.

These reasons are supplied by the narrative itself. One

is suggested by the figurative term "cup," which, according to Scripture usage, denotes bitter afflictions and unmitigated penalties. "Upon the wicked," it is written, "He shall rain snares, fires, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Jerusalem was to be "a cup of trembling" to the surrounding nations; and of the same city Isaiah wrote, "Thou hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out." When the central thought in these passages is applied by Christ to His own state, we are surely warranted in believing His anguish to be unparalleled; for He represents Himself as enduring alone what is set forth in these texts as the aggravated sufferings of entire classes and cities. But, in addition to this, consider what is said regarding His physical condition. He is described as being heated with His struggle in the chill Syrian midnight air, and as covered with sweat that resembled great drops of blood. Most likely it was blood, pressed by inward agony through the skin, and mingling with the crystal dew of heaven that rested on grass and flower. Doddridge, who subscribed to this view, quoted, in support of its reasonableness, various authorities. He says "that Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus maintain that bloody sweats have attended extraordinary anguish of mind, and that Loti, in his *Life of Pope Sixtus V*, and Sir John Chardin in his *History of Persia*, mention similar instances." Voltaire cites a very conclusive case. Writing of Charles IX, he says: "He died in his thirty-fifth year; his disorder was of a very remarkable kind. The blood oozed out of all his pores. This malady, of which there have been other instances, was owing either to excessive fear or evident agitation, or to a feverish and melancholy temperament." Yes; in the quiet of the night he may have remembered the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and he may have recalled his own frantic cry yelled from the window of the Louvre amid the dissonant

clang of the tocsin and the groans of the murdered Huguenots, "Kill, kill, kill." If haunted by such memories, no wonder that the blood fled from such a heart, and through almost impassable channels sought a way to liberty. We have heard of stricken ones whose hair has whitened in a night, whose smile forever has been chased away in a moment, and whose form has been prematurely bowed and blighted. Such is the awful and intimate fellowship between soul and body. But when it is so sympathetic that the wounds of the one forces from the veins the life current of the other, we may rest assured that we are in the presence of a grief which no words can adequately portray, and in which no heart unaided by God can possibly endure.

Commentators very generally express the opinion that Christ in this mysterious agony was bearing the sins of the world, was receiving in His soul the penalty due the transgressor, and was thus beginning to expiate human guilt. They do not discriminate very sharply between the garden and the cross. "The cup" they regard as the figure of atoning sacrifice, and they interpret the prayer as a shrinking from its bitterness, and as a desire to accomplish, if possible, the work of redemption without complying with its conditions. The only differences which they seem to discern between Gethsemane and Calvary are differences of degree and quality, not in kind. Both present an atonement, the one its beginning, the other its consummation; the one its spiritual side, the other its physical. Hence some writers contend that in the garden we have Christ's mental sufferings, and on the cross His bodily. While this view deserves to be treated with marked respect on account of the great men who have given it their support, I cannot subscribe to it. Throughout the Scriptures it is the death of Christ, not His previous anguish, that is set forth as accomplishing salvation. That, in the language of the Scriptures, is said to have paid the debt; for in death "He suffered, the just for

the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Moreover, it is an assumption totally unwarranted, when it is asserted that the agony on the cross was mainly, if not entirely, physical. They who affirm so untenable a proposition surely overlook the fact that Jesus cried out when nailed to the tree, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" an exclamation that indicates a degree of mind anguish never before experienced. It was then that "He poured out His soul unto death," and it was then, and not till then, that "He tasted death for every man."

In my judgment the real explanation of Gethsemane is to be found in Christ's relation to humanity as the sorrow-bearer. He carries our griefs as well as our guilt; He is burdened with our woe as well as with our sin. He not only treads the wine-press, that He may set free the crimson cleansing streams, but He also treads the olive-press, — symbol of peace, — that He may know how to be touched with a feeling sense of our infirmities. By His love and sympathy He takes upon His heart all the pangs, pains, and sorrows of the race from the time that Eve wept over the crime of her first-born to the day when the last tear shall be shed and the last sigh shall be breathed. He carries the afflictions of others just as we do when, by our deep affections, we make the trials, disappointments, bereavements, of our children or our friends our own. But we can only bear a part; He bore all. From the beginning of His ministry He travailed in pain with humanity, gradually discerning its multiplied sufferings; but when He reached the garden, they were fully disclosed in all of their horror to His consciousness.

What a tremendous and appalling disclosure! The melancholy Lenau wrote: —

"Without love, and without God, the way is terrible;
The wind moans in the streets — and Thou?
The whole world is desperately sad."

Yet He bore all. Gather in one vision all that we know of human anguish, and, realizing that our imagination must fall far short of the reality, think what must have been His experience. Traverse the battle-fields, in number infinite, view their nameless horrors, their maimed and slain, and conceive not only of the strife, but of the homes made desolate and the hearts bereaved; then contemplate the plague-infested spots of earth, where disease or famine have swept millions through the portals of terrible death into eternity, and imagine, if you can, the wretchedness entailed by the destroyer; or enter the chambers of torture, where in high state the inquisitor has dealt out the cruelty of the rack, the lash, and block in the name of piety, or where in begrimed, unplastered garrets the violent father or unnatural husband with blows and wounds asserts his superior strength; and then recall the disappointments of every life, — the defeats, the perplexities, worries, and anxieties, the sorrows that are too deep for utterance, and the shame too abysmal for confession, — and a faint idea of what Christ endured will be present to your mind. Yet only a faint idea; for you must multiply these sorrows by the number of the generations that have struggled, sickened, and died, before you can approximate to the truth. All these woes of all these generations were concentrated and pressed upon the soul of Christ during the brief hour spent beneath the dark olives of Gethsemane.

Schopenhauer exclaims, "If God made this world, I would not like to be God; its woes would break my heart." And this is what they came near to doing with the heart of God. Man-created and man-related, the misery which fills the earth afflicted Him, and its gigantic magnitude smote Him with trembling and amazement. He recoiled from it, His human nature shrank from it, and the intensity of His emotion became unsustainable as He realized that from Him alone could deliverance come. Should He fail in His mis-

sion, should He not reach the cross, then must the race continue in helplessness and bitter anguish. Conscious of this, that He alone could dry the tears, bind up the wounds, and restore happiness to mankind, and realizing how vast the undertaking, no wonder that He was dismayed, oppressed, and overwhelmed. No wonder that He sank beneath the contending feelings of sympathy and responsibility, and in His prostration suggested to the poet the reverent inquiry : —

“ Dare I say,
Creator, thou art feebler than thy work !
Creator, thou art sadder than thy creature !
A worm, and not a man ;
Yea, no worm — but a curse.”

My brethren, from this portion of our study we may gather some lessons of practical value. We may learn that the most innocent can hardly expect to escape Gethsemane. It lies directly in the way to heaven. All of us must pass through it, and the more innocent and morally sensitive we are the heavier will be its shadows. Agony of mind is more unbearable than the sufferings of the body ; and while that which we endure on our own account may be intense, that which we endure on the account of others is always more so. This is what I mean when I say that the purer and more sensitive we are, the keener and more certain will be our anguish. Will not the mother feel more for the welfare of her children than she ever felt for her own ? Will not the patriot be more concerned for the shame that beclouds his country than for his own renown ? Will not the philanthropist and the preacher be more solicitous for the temporal and eternal salvation of the race than for their own personal advantage ? Jeremiah wept, because of the sin and shame of Jerusalem, such tears as he never shed over his own afflictions. Paul could wish himself accursed from Christ

for Israel's sake, and every child of God will, to some extent, realize that he, like his Master, is appointed a grief-bearer in the world. The divine law is that we "bear each other's burdens," that we "weep with those that weep," and that we travail in sympathy with every fellow-being. And as Christ was conscious of this relation to human sorrow, and that its healing was committed to His trust, so His followers will be deeply sensible of the truth that the growth of joy and comfort is dependent on their influence and exertions. Church of the Redeemer, you are in a solemn sense responsible for the continuance of woe and evil, for the sigh of every orphan, for the mute appeal of every friendless wanderer, for the blasphemy and despair of millions who have been morally wronged and murdered. This we may learn from our Savior's agony, and, when we shall feel it as we ought, we too shall be "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." We too shall be overborne with anguish, and we too shall faintly echo His mysterious prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."

It is assumed by those writers who identify Gethsemane with Calvary that in this petition the Savior is seeking release from the sufferings of the cross; that He seeks to be excused from the completion of His passion, if deliverance to mankind is possible in any other way. "Let this cup pass, nevertheless not My will but Thine be done," signifies to these interpreters that He shrank from the very work that He came to accomplish, although rather than have it fail He would submit to its stern exactions. This is not my thought. To me it is incredible that from the beginning He should have contemplated His death, have expressed Himself as straitened until it should be finished, should have conversed with Moses and Elias regarding it on the Mount of Transfiguration, and should have used these impressive words in alluding to it: "For this cause came I to this hour. What shall I say? Save me from this hour?" and then have

faltered as the crisis approached. He knew more profoundly than any one else the indispensableness of the atonement, that it was no arbitrary expedient, but a provision of grace imperatively demanded by the righteous government of God; and it is utterly inconceivable that He should have prayed for the impossible. No; instead of fearing the cross, He feared He would not live to reach it. His sufferings in the garden were so intense and so crushing that His vital resources were failing, and unless arrested He would succumb without accomplishing His mission. He sought their alleviation, that He might be spared to finish the work God had given Him to do. His was the prayer of heroic devotion to a great cause, not that of faltering cowardice. And as the Apostle Paul has it, "He offered up supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared," or "in respect to the thing that He feared." He feared He would not reach the hill of shame, but He prayed, and an angel strengthened Him, and calmly He met His adversaries, and with the composure of infinite dignity yielded Himself a perfect sacrifice for sin. In view of this explanation, we can understand His resignation. Permit me, in accordance with it, to paraphrase His words: "Let this cup pass," this anguish of the grief-bearer, "if it be possible," for I feel that it is unfitting Me for what remains; but if it is not possible, if I must drink to the dregs, and even if I am to fail in My mission, "Thy will be done." He preferred to go forward, to brave the horror of great darkness that awaited Him; but if God at last had ordered otherwise, while He deplored the decision, He would not rebel. If it is true, as many suppose, that Satan at this hour was seeking to tempt Him from the consummation of His passion, how grand the victory He achieved over the destroyer when He not only remained steadfast in purpose, but actually longed for and courted the final conflict!

And from this, my brethren, we may learn the sublime motive that should actuate us in praying for relief from any suffering that tends to incapacitate us for duty. Are we oppressed with care? Are we afflicted and distressed beyond measure? Well, we may look to God for help. But for what reason? That we may employ our recovered strength of body or of mind in our own interests, or that we may devote returning vigor to worldliness and pleasure? No; but that we may consecrate them to some grander work than we have ever attempted, — a work involving more self-sacrifice, and even self-immolation. It is this spirit that redeems prayer from the suspicion of selfishness and littleness, and it is this spirit that imparts to resignation its moral splendor. How grand a meaning do the words “Thy will be done” take on when they are breathed by one who would do more, not less, for others! Picture to yourselves a young minister, a saintly mother, a devoted missionary, or a consecrated Christian smitten with disease, or with pangs of heart-trouble, desiring succor, that life might be more absolutely surrendered to the cause of humanity, yet having grace to say, “If it is Thy pleasure to cut me off in the midst of my years; if it is Thy purpose to take me home to heaven, thus saving me from anxiety, care, and pain, ‘Thy will be done,’ ” and you have touched the highest point of moral greatness. Such a one is not courting ease, not impatient for bliss, but is so anxious to do something that the world may be happier that it would cost him a struggle to subdue his will, if God should decide that the cross must immediately be changed for the crown.

“Hast thou climbed ambition’s height,
Man of genius, man of might?
Seeing from thy lofty seat
All life’s storms beneath thy feet,
Empire spread before thine eye,
Homage, fear, and flattery? —

Amid the sounds that reach thee there,
Kneel, and seek the power of prayer.

“ Hast thou, in life’s loneliest vale,
Seen thy patient labors fail, —
Felt ill-fortune’s daily thrill
Waste thine energy of will?
Yet without revenge or hate,
Wouldst thou stand the stroke of fate?
Wouldst thou bear as man should bear? —
Kneel, and seek the power of prayer.

“ Hast thou, man of intellect,
Seen thy soaring spirit checked,
Struggling in the righteous cause,
Champion of God’s slighted laws, —
Seen the slave, or the supine,
Win the prize that should be thine?
Wouldst thou scorn, and wouldst thou spare? —
Kneel, and seek the power of prayer.”

When the Savior returned to the disciples, whom He had set to watch and pray, He found them asleep. Strange that they should have slumbered so near to Him in His agony; but not stranger than that we should be insensible to the awful import of His sufferings, and so blind to the meaning of our own. Nevertheless, this too frequently comes to pass; and, as a consequence, we are as unprepared to defend His cause as the disciples were to shield His person, and are as unprofited by our afflictions as they were by His. We may sleep on the threshold of the garden, and permit right to suffer at the hands of violence. Let it be so no more. Rather, let this scene so impress us, so quicken our discernment and diligence, that never of the Church may it be said, when the torches of wickedness flame against the sky, what Jesus said of Himself: “Behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

XIX.

THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS.

“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”—
John vi, 70.

IT is a remarkable fact that several German writers have undertaken to whitewash and vindicate the character of Judas. De Quincey approves their endeavor, and if he would not have us exalt the traitor to a rank coequal with beatified saints, he would have us reverse the judgment of history, and would have us in the main regard him as an excellent though erring individual.

I think it likely that we are in danger of judging historic personages either too leniently or too harshly, as our prejudices and misconceptions may incline us; and that especially when we criticise we are tempted to ignore the golden rule in a way we would not were the party concerned on hand to speak in his own behalf. The immorality of such conduct is apparent. The dead have as clear a right to fair and generous treatment as the living. And if one who moved among men generations since, or but yesterday lay down “to dusty death,” performed his work faithfully and nobly, it is only the littleness of the censorious and the cruelty of the uncharitable that would drag out of obscurity some trivial error of head or heart to tarnish the luster of a name which is cherished in the affections of the people. For instance, the unfriendly criticisms on General Garfield were contemptible. Even if warranted, what they allege could not seriously affect the estimate of posterity, and the only purpose they

served was to add another proof to that sad array of evidence, which needs no augmentation, that our earthly heroes are not divine. Arthur Helps, in one of his stimulating books, describes an imbrowned plain in India where neither wood nor sheltering crag is near. He pictures a snake gliding from under a stone, and then as summarily slain by a native of the country. He adds that a denizen of those regions would look round the whole horizon for something to come. "It does come. Slowly from a distant point there rises a hideous, ungainly bird, the galinazo, which, wheeling round in circles, swoops down upon the snake." His application of the illustration is as follows: "That is just to my mind what there is at present in the politics of the world. At the stillest moment, on the smallest cause of encounter, an 'obscene bird' is ready to sweep down upon the spot." This is unhappily too true. But to me it seems that only the most voracious and prurient appetite would gorge itself on some now lifeless evil, and by its violent attack invite attention to the one defect that disfigures the noble reputation of departed greatness.

We may err, however, on the other side. We may take a Nero who murdered his own mother, or a Borgia who made poisoning a fine art, or a Henry who considered matrimony a convenience, or a Napoleon who took to war as a pastime, and we may, by disingenuous presentations of facts, by artful and constrained interpretations of events, and by a plausible and pettifogging management of the case, place the expression of an angel on the face of a fiend. This may be charity to the dead, but it is cruelty to the living. It is doing more than drawing the mantle of oblivion over iniquity, it is the transformation of its leprous carcass into a holy thing. This is to degrade the function of history. The annals of the past are messengers to the present. But if they attempt to make that

right in a former age which we would condemn in this, if they apologize for what we denounce, and if they eulogize vice, having thinly disguised it in the robe of virtue, they had better fall dumb forever. They do not bear honest testimony; they confuse our morals and lower their tone, and render us indifferent to the judgment of posterity. For these reasons I deprecate the endeavors which have recently been made to restore the fair fame of the apostolic pariah. What special pleading can do in the interests of such a cause that refined piece of literary juggling which bears the name of Judas Iscariot as subject, and that of De Quincey as author abundantly and strikingly exhibits. Its Quixotic knight-errantry I shall not presume to review. It would be like measuring lances with the chivalrous gentleman of La Mancha; even successful refutation of the arguments employed would hardly repay the labor. But their total inadequacy may be inferred from the fact that they do not satisfactorily dispose of such passages as these which refer to the character in question: "One of you is a devil;" "Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him;" "Satan entered into him;" "Woe to that man by whom the Son of God is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had never been born;" "He went to his own place;" "And let his habitation be desolate and let no man dwell therein;" passages which blacken with infamy the being to whom they are applied, and render it impossible for tricks of criticism to reinstate him in the good opinion of mankind.

History is replete with instances of base and sordid treachery. Ethelwold cheats Edgar of England out of his bride, and Edgar, discovering the perfidy, finds convenient, secret means for destroying Ethelwold. Pompey, escaping from Cæsar, is murdered by the very power he appeals to for protection, one of his own soldiers, Septimius, being the first to raise the knife against him. Edward the Mar-

tyr is slain by a servant of his stepmother at her instigation, and while he is bending from his horse to receive the cup of hospitality from her hand. By these means tyranny has frequently triumphed over liberty, and for a time wrong over right. By these means have thrones been usurped, bishoprics and popedom been secured, and fortunes been amassed, and inheritances won. In view of such a record, well may the greatest of our poets indignantly ask: "Who should be trusted now, when one's right hand is perjured to the bosom?" We would be amazed, depressed and overwhelmed could we realize how prevalent treachery is in the everyday life of the world. Man is continually selling his brother-man, and sometimes for less than thirty pieces of silver. Friends plot against each other, politicians trick each other, families prey upon each other, and almost everywhere we find the despicable spirit which betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss. Although the enormity of Iscariot's crime may never be approached — though of that I am not certain — the frequency of its repetition in one form or another, the distrust which it creates, the misery it diffuses, call for such a study of its character as will arouse against it the moral indignation of society, and serve to promote loyalty to friendship and faithfulness to obligation. With this end before me I speak to-night.

The name of Jesus had been growing in popularity, and it was impossible to foresee into what portentous dimensions the movement which He represented would grow. Several of the Pharisees had secretly subscribed to the new opinions, and they seemed very rapidly to be leavening society. The ultimate effect on Judaism could not be doubtful, and their possible influence on the already "strained" political relations between Rome and Jerusalem could not fail to excite grave apprehension. Narrow and short-sighted views regarding religion and patriotism

impelled the rulers among the Jews to contrive some means by which Jesus could be removed and His cause be suppressed. To attack Him and arrest Him in the open day appeared impolitic, and might prove dangerous. To discover His whereabouts in the night, being, as He was, without abiding-place, and gain possession of His person without spreading alarm, could hardly be effected without difficulty. An injudicious course of conduct might result in angry and turbulent demonstrations on the part of the populace, and these might lead the Romans to curtail the privileges of the nation. To escape these perilous contingencies Christ must be stealthily secured; for His presence once removed, the crowd would lose coherency, it would become disheartened and demoralized, and, with the usual fickleness of crowds, very probably would, on the coming of disaster to the idol, wildly take up itself the iconoclastic work. Statecraft and priestcraft, therefore in the name of patriotism and piety, leagued themselves to accomplish the overthrow of the Prophet-Preacher, and, as they pondered the means, the instrument of villainy knocked at their door. Judas Iscariot entered. An olive-complexioned, low-browed, short-necked, middle-sized, round-shouldered, slow-gaited, soft-footed man stood before them. Thick masses of black, coarse hair fell entangled from his head; his glance was restless, shy and furtive; his speech was slow, ambiguous and cautious, and his whole manner nervous, hesitating and indecisive. His garments were those of a Jewish peasant or mechanic, and his social status was manifest in his bearing as in his dress. I paint partly from tradition, partly from imagination, and judged by what is recorded of him in the Scriptures the portrait cannot be very unlike the original. The bargain was soon concluded, the plan determined, and with the details intrusted to his care, with thirty pieces of silver in

his possession, and with the well-earned contempt of the respectable traffickers in blood, Judas went out. .

“ And it was night.”

The panther-like step of the traitor fell gently on the pavement as he glided into the night, his soul enwrapped in denser gloom than ever shrouded nature's loveliness, that he might stealthily summons a mob to his assistance, and that even a Roman cohort might be notified of a possible emergency. Hitherto the powers of darkness have been restrained; and though they have before this assailed the life of the Galilean, as when Herod sought to slay the Divine child and the men of Nazareth would have hurled Him down the sheer precipice, they have always been defeated. But now what gigantic forms of baseness, hypocrisy, malignant hatred and devilish cruelty appear on the stage of history as though the forces of hell were in awful irruption and determined on a final desperate wrestle with the forces of heaven. Among these forms there is none more pitiable and despicable than that of an apostle turned hireling, spy and betrayer of innocent blood, fit associate and conspirator with sanctimonious rulers, who suborned false witnesses, and who by menace and intrigue constrained Pilate to decree a sentence he himself characterized as unjust, and who to crown their infamy bribed the rough soldiers of Rome to lie for the benefit of the Hebrew faith. Not unlikely the companionship of “one of the Twelve,” as Judas is pathetically designated, with these sleuth hounds of an exacting and tyrannous creed, added immeasurably to our Lord's agony in Gethsemane, when tears and sweat and blood bedewed the melancholy earth. It was the delightful privilege of Brutus to exclaim when dying, “My heart doth joy, that yet in all my life I found no man but he was true to me.” But this joy was denied to the truest heart that ever beat; and one can well imagine with what emotion He gave utterance in Gethsemane to the words: “Behold, the Son of Man is

betrayed into the hands of sinners." Scarcely had He thus spoken when a crowd of rude officials, with flaming torches, sticks and staves, penetrated His retreat. Jesus calmly prepared to meet them, encircled by the little group of trembling disciples. In the uncertain light the true victim might not be seized, and miscarriage might prove perilous. An expedient was soon devised, and in the gleam of unsteady torches a dark figure emerges from the invading throng and slowly writhes himself, serpent-like, into the immediate presence of the Nazarene. Statuesque, immovable, the Nazarene stands, commiseration and contempt mingling in His glance, His face shaded with unspeakable melancholy, but His form erect, majestic and imperial. The figures meet; they touch; the one hisses the friendly words, "Hail, Master!" and kisses him; the other, still calm and motionless, reprovably, but tenderly, answers, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" The infamy is complete.

Is it not strange that Christ, knowing the character of this man as well as He did — and that He did know him is evident from what He said about him before the scene in the garden had taken place — is it not strange, I say, that He should have received him and trusted him as a disciple? Perhaps the mystery can only be partially explained. It should be remembered that it was not the habit of Christ to repel any who, leaving home and friends, seemed anxious to be attached to His person. He would rather encourage them and bring to bear upon them the refining and renewing influence of His ministry. Whatever truth could do, whatever kindness, whatever generous treatment could accomplish, He would attempt, to rescue the dark, sinister man from his evil spirit. Those who hastily conclude that Judas was a vulgar hypocrite misread him altogether. What he may have become in the course of

his career as a disciple is one thing; what he was at its commencement is another. What was there in the early standing and work of Jesus to tempt anyone to espouse His cause unless truly convinced of its heavenly origin? Nothing. He was not only poor, but He preached poverty; He not only declared that His kingdom was not of this world, but He insisted that the world should be abandoned. But even on the supposition that Judas did not so understand Him, and, following traditional conceptions regarding Messiah's reign, believed that it would confer earthly honors and rewards, and hence pledged His support, he was honest enough as far as he went. Unless he had been, he never, with these impressions and expectations, would have joined a movement which had furnished no signs that it would be able to do what he desired. His mistake was in identifying himself with it because of the conviction that it was the kingdom of prophecy; without really understanding its import or sympathizing with its aims. When these were discerned, and he found his heart unreconciled to them, then he lost his sincerity; but it was even then rather the duty of Christ to reclaim him than to thrust him out to perish. And certainly He attempted to save the man who was so widely separated from Him in thought and feeling. He frequently preached in his hearing against avarice and ambition, and before the temptation came warned him plainly of its approach. He did, then, all that could be done for him; and His mercy explains why He received and cherished so tenderly the viper that was to sting Him.

This naturally leads to the inquiry, What were the causes which impelled Judas to his crime. Avarice was undoubtedly one, ambition was probably another. He seems to have been a scheming, grasping soul, and to have never risen to the conception of a motive higher than his own selfish interests. Sincerely believing in Jesus as Mes-

siah, and as sincerely believing that His Kingdom would in the long run assume an earthly form, and would minister to his aggrandizement, he compromised himself to their support. But he was doomed to disappointment. Christ never sought the dignity of worldly royalty; and attempts to establish a worldly throne were never even hinted at. To Judas, who did not understand the spiritual aspect of the new economy, it seemed that all his pains would go for naught, and that if things continued to drift as they were doing he would never see his dreams of personal social elevation realized. Under these circumstances he sets to work to plan a *coup d'état*, a stroke that would revolutionize the policy of Jesus, and force Him to assert His regal rank in terms that would savor less of Heaven and more of earth. His mean, cunning nature doubtless pictured himself as holding high station in the new kingdom, perhaps promoted to the treasury, at least holding important office, and having free access to the purse of the people. To bring about this notable scheme he determines to precipitate a conflict between the populace and their rulers, and to place Jesus in such extreme peril as to compel Him to head what would in reality prove a political movement; and he conceived that both ends would be effected easily by betraying his Master to His enemies. The Master would resist, the citizens would be roused, the Herodian dynasty would be overthrown, revolution would prevail, and on its stormful waves he would ride to fame and fortune. If I am correct in these views, we are not to suppose because he struck for a larger stake than thirty pieces of silver, and did not contemplate the killing of Christ, that his moral obliquity was any the less. He was moved by selfish considerations just the same. To gratify his mercenary spirit he was willing to jeopardize the safety of Christ, to imperil the lives of the disciples, and to curse his country with fraternal, or, rather, unfraternal

strife. It was treason against the commands of his chief, against His wishes and plans; and it was treason against the aims and constitution of the Christian community, and in reality against the State as well; and all for the purpose of satisfying his insatiable greed and his unhallowed ambition. Wherever this spirit is found no persons and no interests are safe, and as we know how deep-rooted and widespread selfishness is, and how overpowering man's lust for gold, we may judge how constant and grave is our peril.

“Why this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
Pluck stout men's pillows from beneath their heads;
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;
Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench; this is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
To the April-day again.”

The mere love of gain will trample on all rights, will rob the workman of his wages, widows and orphans of their due, and sell them to abysmal penury. None of us are safe from its open assaults and its secret maraudings. We cannot tell the moment when our lives, our fortunes, our reputation may appear to others in the way of their temporal advancement, and may incite them to plot against our peace. Yea, and if this malignant sentiment has sway in our own hearts we cannot for an instant be sure that we will not ourselves, Esau-like, sell our birthright, or, David-like, put our Uriah out of the way, and, Judas-like, with a kiss betray our holy religion.

The guilt of the traitor is enhanced by the intimacy of the relation that existed between him and his victim.

There is a famous picture by Leonardo on the "Last Supper," which departs from the conventional serenity of compositions on that subject, and represents the exciting moment in the scene when, in answer to Christ's declaration, "One of you shall betray Me," the Apostles are asking earnestly, "Is it I?" and Judas is forced by the example of the rest unblushingly to inquire, "Master, is it I?" The calm, unapproachable majesty of the Savior's face is in strong contrast with the cunning villainy which is expressed in that of Judas, seamed and plowed as it undoubtedly was by intense and sordid passion. When we think of him as breaking bread with the Being against whom he is plotting, or at least as dipping with Him his hand in the dish, we are amazed at his effrontery, and are startled by his shameless ingratitude. To seek to extenuate his deed by saying that he really hoped his scheming would result advantageously to Christ is mischievously immoral; for his conduct should be judged by its ultimate motive, which was his own selfish advancement. In all similar cases it is the confidential relations, the terms of affection and friendship, which render the guilt of the betrayer so dark and deep, and which increase the scorn of posterity; and these are the things which add to the grief of him who has to suffer from the wiles of the conspirator. Jugurtha was not merely indignant, but was likewise keenly wounded by the treachery of Bomilcar in whom he trusted. He felt as Antony did, who had suffered in like manner:

"Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest."

Thus Frederick II felt when he found the man he had honored, Peter de Vineia, trying to poison him; and when Becket cried to Fitzurze, "What is this, Reginald! I have loaded you with favors, and *you* come to me armed and in the church," his soul was afflicted in like manner. In all

these cases, and in hosts of others, we hear the cry of the assassinated Cæsar, *et tu Brute!*

“For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar’s angel;
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all:
For when the noble Cæsar saw *him* stab,
Ingratitude more strong than traitors’ arms
Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart.”

O, believe me, black as treachery always is, it is doubly black when friendship forgets itself, when childhood, when brotherhood learns the deceiver’s arts and plots the ruin of those whom it should cherish and defend.

But such treason is never in the highest sense successful. It fails, and it ought to fail. It cannot be made to triumph permanently. Thank God! What blank amazement, what impotent wrath filled the heart of Judas on the miscarriage of his plans. Jesus did not assert Himself as he hoped He would, revolution did not follow, and he found himself alone with his thirty pieces of silver, on the face of each particular piece his imagination inflamed by conscience must have seen the image of Nemesis, and have read the taunting, mocking words, “Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?” Poor he was, poorer than before; for reputation was lost, and now whither shall he go? No man will trust him, no man shelter or protect him. They who employed him despise him, and will have nothing to do with him or his ill-gotten gains. No wonder that he repented; but, alas! it was the repentance of despair. He is mad with himself, enraged at his own folly; doubtless he cursed his own stupidity, and trembled at the fact that he had brought innocent blood upon his soul. His was the repentance of disappointment and of fear. The money clinked in his purse and rung its silver notes in his ear. What shall he do with it? He must get rid of it. It witnesses against him, and he dare not bear it

about his person. If the representatives of religion would only take it he might derive some consolation from the thought that it was being employed to help others. But they thrust it from them; and thus he who has sinned for money has more of it than he cares to have; he who has schemed for it now racks his brain to get rid of it; he who had made it his god discovers, when it is too late, that it is his devil.

More solemn question yet, What shall he do with himself? He can throw away the silver, but how can he dispose of his wretched self? Tormented by the past, appalled by the future, his folly culminates in suicide. And then—what then? “He goes to his own place.” Such is the testimony of Holy Writ. What does it mean? Where can be the place in all God’s fair creation for such a soul as his? He would not be in his place were he introduced among the unfallen and redeemed. Judas would shrink from such hallowed society; would cower before and flee from its unsullied purity. Think of him as a free spirit in a universe where every sphere is peopled, wandering from star to star seeking his own place. Thus may he wander eternally; but so long as the blood stain lies on his conscience, and the upbraiding words of Jesus “betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?” echo in his soul, so long will he find no rest among the untold millions who despise treachery and scorn deceit. “His own place” can only be in a world of spirits like himself—faithless, sordid, base, and treacherous.

Men and women, avoid everything like insincerity. You can never win happiness by treason against your fellows. The gains you think you obtain by duplicity in the end will turn out to be losses. Failure awaits the man who disregards the claims of friendship and of obligation. Learn from the wretched career of Judas to be loyal to the one and faithful to the other. This is the

moral of my discourse to-night. Loyalty to friendship, faithfulness to obligation, and especially loyalty to Jesus, "who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and faithfulness to that sacred cause for which He died, and on which hang the hopes of all mankind. Ruskin says, "The sin of Judas is essentially the sin of the whole world." My congregation, let it not be your sin. The painter-critic also adds, "Men do not disbelieve their Christ; they sell Him." Yes, sell Him for ease, for applause, for profit, for anything that ministers to lust or passion, for thirty paltry pieces of silver they betray Him and His cause by their indifference, their worldliness, and their insane devotion to business or to pleasure. If you are under these blinding influences, before it is too late, I pray you, break away from them, and by the sincere renewal of your allegiance convert the kiss of the traitor into the kiss of the simple-hearted and loyal disciple.

XX.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS.

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I then do with Jesus, which is called Christ?—*Matthew xxvii, 22.*

NEVER was there a more remarkable or disgraceful trial than that to which our Lord was subjected. The proceedings against Socrates were not as violent, and the high-handed measures of Laud and Jeffreys were not as shockingly outrageous. An ordinary and superficial reader of the Gospels cannot fail to perceive how irregular and disorderly were the steps taken in the name of justice to compass the Savior's death; and legal writers, such as Greenleaf and Dupin, have distinctly pointed out the particular forms of law which were shamefully ignored or shamelessly perverted in obtaining a verdict. According to accepted principles governing criminal cases, it was the duty of the court, the Sanhedrim, to save life if possible, not to destroy; it was further forbidden to carry an investigation through the night, or to pronounce sentence without the judges having had time previously to fast; and it was provided that the tribunal should not be informal, that there should be an accuser, and that the prisoner should have the assistance of suitable counsel. These safeguards and regulations were one and all utterly disregarded by the Jewish authorities in their indecent zeal to put Jesus out of the way. From the beginning He was treated, not as an innocent, but as a guilty man. The court that assumed jurisdiction was not lawfully constituted; it appointed no advocate for the prisoner; the Judge was the accuser, and

the witnesses against him were assiduously sought, and none in his favor were called or admitted. When the case was carried to the Roman magistrate, it was conducted before that august functionary in the same arbitrary and despotic manner. Jesus is dealt with as though He had no rights, and His person is insulted and abused by those who ought to have been his defenders. The charges against Him are changed to suit the new tribunal, and the magistrate realizes and acknowledges that they are base fabrications. Nevertheless, he condemns Him whom he declares to be guiltless, and hands over to the bloody scourge and cruel cross the Being in whom he sees no fault. These outrages have not the poor excuse that they were deserved, because the prisoner had assumed to be the Messiah. The Old Testament does not warrant capital punishment under such circumstances, and even if it did, it does not countenance the monstrous infamies committed to secure the conviction of Jesus. They are beyond the possibility of extenuation, and prove that the prosecution was a persecution inspired by fanatical maliciousness, and that the end of the trial was a judicial murder, as undeserved as it was unmerciful.

The most conspicuous figure next to that of the victim which appears in this sad history, is that of Pilate. He was the Roman procurator, the sixth that had borne that dignity in Judea. We know but little of his early life, and that little is merely traditionary, and not worth repeating. It is enough for our purposes to view him simply as he was at the time when he acted so ignoble a part in the proceedings against Jesus. He had come to Jerusalem as the feast of the Passover was approaching, and as it might be necessary to prevent outbreaks and preserve order among a hostile population greatly augmented by the throngs who came from the provinces to participate in the solemnities. It cannot be shown that he was a very

bad man or a vicious ruler. If he at times dealt harshly with the Jews, it may be said in his favor that he was not as rigorous as others, and his charge was a peculiarly arrogant and tempestuous one. But while he compares favorably with those who preceded him in his high office, he was altogether too pliant, too weak, too selfish to meet its responsibilities faithfully and honorably. He was essentially a trimmer, like Cicero, and was as destitute of inflexible integrity as ever Lord Bacon was. He was a politician in the worst sense of that term, and, having a supreme regard to his own interests, veered, oscillated, and vacillated to hold the regard of those whom he governed, and to retain the favor of the gloomy Tiberius, who had appointed him, and whose creature he was. Once, before the trial of Jesus occurred, his indecisiveness had been proven. He had quartered soldiers in Jerusalem, and of course they had taken with them their banners bearing the image of the Emperor. This act roused the indignation of the populace. The citizens regarded it as an insult, and as an endeavor to implant idolatry in the Holy City. A storm arose, and before its fury Pilate succumbed, and the hated symbols were removed. It could, therefore, easily be anticipated by the Jewish authorities how far such a man as this would stand by his convictions. They foresaw what actually took place, that he would be unable to withstand their importunities and threatenings, and would ultimately yield to their wishes. Unhappily their confidence in the result was justified; but it may be said in his favor that he tried, or thought that he tried to save the victim of their fury. He protests, he pleads, he proposes expedients, he seeks to evade responsibility, and halts, stammers, and stutters between his sense of right and the seeming demands of worldly policy. And we can conceive of no spectacle more pitiable than he presents, when tortured by his own conscience, disturbed by the

warnings of his wife, and overawed by the dignity of the prisoner, and at the same moment cringing before the passionate vehemence of the priests, he acknowledges his deplorable weakness and helpless perplexity in the words of the text: "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?"

These words enable us to connect this mockery of a trial in a very practical manner with ourselves, and to derive from it especially one important lesson bearing on our spiritual welfare. It is to be remembered that Jesus yet stands before the bar of earthly judgment. Providence has indeed reversed the decision of the courts at Jerusalem; but just as the insulting proceedings continued even after innocence had been made perfectly manifest, so the claims of our Lord are still being sifted and scrutinized as though they had never been passed upon and allowed. The world has been unable to get rid of Him. It is obliged to deal with Him, and to make some disposition of His demands and assumptions. He touches it on every side. The pressure of his moral influence is felt in business, in politics, in literature, in domestic circles, and in spiritual struggles. He cannot be ignored nor successfully avoided. At some point in the journey of life He will appear, and at the close it is most likely that He will not be absent. Go where we may, we meet Him; think on what we please, we confront Him; and follow whatever pursuits delight us, we still feel His presence and the weight of His teachings. As the Jews were compelled by His prominence to come to some decision regarding Him, either to accept or reject Him, so every individual and every community is shut up to the necessity of answering the crucial question, "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" Books are written for and against Him, societies are formed, lecturers and preachers go forth to speak, all with the avowed purpose of aiding in shaping an adequate and consistent reply. It is

as though He stood bound and guarded before the tribunal of humanity, His many works and gracious words testifying in His favor, and yet many assailants and enemies aspersing His character and maligning His name. What is the judge to do? How shall He dispose of the case? He must dispose of it; but in what manner? And thus millions are puzzled [and perplexed, inclining one way and then another, undetermined and undecided, and crying in a weak, quavering way, "What shall we do with Jesus, which is called Christ?"]

Now, I think the trial scene at Jerusalem, taken in connection with the review and reversal of its decisions by the Court of Heaven, will assist us in forming a very definite idea of the answer that should be given. It shows us what corrupt humanity did with Him, what Jesus did with Himself, and what was ultimately done with Him and for Him by Providence, and so teaches us, both by light and shadow, how we also should deal with Him.

The rulers of Israel sacrificed Him to their religious prejudices and preconceived ideas. He antagonized with their conceptions of the Messiah, and with their estimate of their own standing before God. He had called them hypocrites, had questioned the probability of their deliverance from the damnation of hell, and had set at naught their hope of temporal enlargement by proclaiming a kingdom, whose subjects, aims and principles were heavenly. These revolutionary teachings they could not endure, and the dislike of them increased their dislike of their Author, and as they could not answer them they determined to crucify Him. They did not examine, test and weigh them; they preferred the more sanguinary method of terminating debate. Blood was more in their line than argument, and murder was easier than refutation. The scaffold, the dungeon and the secret assassination have from time immemorial been the convenient

methods of tyranny, just as insolence, slander and vituperation are now the usual weapons of ignorant and self-conceited bigotry. No wonder, then, that our Lord's defense was stopped by a blow, and that He should be silenced by death, when it was evident that logic and proof were impotent against Him. While it is happily impossible for this treatment to be literally repeated, it may in a measure be imitated. Instead of dealing with Him fairly and examining His claims candidly, we may, on account of some cherished theory which His character or doctrine apparently jeopardizes, insult His memory, slander the good name of His mother, and make Him out either an arrant impostor or a weak enthusiast. Like Shelley, we may crucify Him afresh in our poetic frenzy; like Renan, we may deck Him out in the mockery of kingly garments; and like Voltaire, we may take up the insane cry of "crush the wretch." Voltaire reminds me of Caiaphas, excited, wild and violent. Strauss recalls Annas, crafty, plausible and deadly; while their followers, who say little and think less, but give the weight of their influence against Him, recall the lay-figures of the Sanhedrim, pliant, docile and murderous. They deal with Jesus according to the means at their disposal, as did their prototypes, and in a way which we shall see is neither adequate nor satisfactory, neither commendable nor convincing.

Pilate seems desirous of acting with greater fairness; but in the end he concedes, from motives of self-interest and political policy, what the rulers demanded, infatuated as they were by prejudice. Our Savior intimates that his guilt was less, as he did not instigate the unjust proceedings against Him; but He does not clear him of blame, as he lent his great office to the machinations of these persecutors. Now, it is to be observed that Pilate tried to do several things with Jesus before he finally surrendered Him to the voracious malice of His enemies. For instance, he under-

took to dismiss Him altogether. Hearing that He was a Galilean, and that Herod, who ruled in that province, was in Jerusalem, he handed Him over to his jurisdiction. Herod evidently appreciated the compliment, but politely declined to help the Roman out of the difficulty. That expedient not succeeding, he patronized Him, and apologized for Him. He said to Jesus somewhat haughtily, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?" And he intimates to the prosecutors pretty plainly that harsh measures were not deserved. He likewise proposes to exchange Barabbas, a rough, fanatical agitator, and perhaps something worse, for Christ, hoping thus by a compromise, which implied that the Savior was far from being what He should be, to escape the dilemma in which he found himself. And, when he had failed in all of these measures, he tries to settle the matter by solemnly washing his hands, a sign that he regarded himself as innocent of complicity in the murder about to be committed. That is, Pilate thinks he can abandon Jesus to scorn and suffering without personal guilt by merely washing the hands that should and could have protected Him. Possibly he imagined that this parade and display of horror would overawe the enemies of Jesus, and constrain them to let Him go. But in this he was mistaken, for they only cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." Evidently the governor had not done with Jesus what ought to be done. Jesus could not be waved out of sight, and would not be patronized. Neither could He be exchanged, and a little hand-washing could not in any wise avail to cleanse the soul that rejected Him. Humanity to a great extent falls into the errors of Pilate. There are those who think that they settle the question of religion, especially as it is pressed on their attention by Jesus, when they determine to have nothing to do with it. But that is a dismissal of the subject; it is no decision.

Others there are who essay to patronize the Lord. They do not love Him, they do not care for Him; but they do make the impression that He is very much indebted to them for the support they have condescended to give His cause. There are yet others who, like the Jews, prefer Barabbas to Christ; that is, their lusts, their appetites and barbarities are more highly prized than the Son of Man, and they are willing to accept Him only on the condition that they may keep these. And there are hosts of others who feel that His claims are worthy of confidence, and yet abandon Him to His foes and never do anything definite in His behalf. They declare that they are not to blame; that circumstances prevent them being thorough Christians; and that their responsibility ends with the expression of their good will. Such trifling with the Master can hardly be the true way to treat Him.

This impression deepens into conviction when we consider what Jesus did with Himself. His bearing during the trial was marked by a calm dignity and self-respect, which reveal a deliberate purpose to leave no doubt in the minds of those about Him as to whence He came, and who He was. His fortitude under the sufferings inflicted, His composure under the insults heaped upon Him, and His silence, as well as His speech, prove that He is no ordinary being. Subject a man to ridicule, and however heroic he may be, it abates somewhat from the impressiveness of his presence. I think it doubtful whether any mere mortal could have been mocked as Jesus was, could have been arrayed in fantastic garments, could have been taunted by reviling tongues, and could have been made an occasion for the coarse mirth of soldiers, without perceptibly degrading him in the eyes of those who contemplated the humiliation. But we are conscious of no such feeling as we picture the Christ crowned with thorns, sceptered with a reed, and clothed with the soldier's scarlet sagum,

in imitation of royalty and in derision of His assumptions. He is just as majestic, as commanding and as Godlike when the enmity of man attempts to shame Him as when He was calmly teaching on the mount or subduing the tempest with a word. Who then is this Being against whom the barbed shafts of scorn, contempt and burlesque are impotent, and whose very look converts the laughter excited at His expense into tears? He is certainly more dignified than His judges. They are passionate, furious, hasty, superstitious and fickle. They reveal none of the nobler and loftier qualities of manhood, and not even their pomp and the solemnity of their high office can shield them from reproach. The more we think of them the more ludicrous they appear, and the less worthy of respectful mention. In every way Jesus is their superior. He seems to be more the judge than they, and they seem more like the criminal than He. Strange if, after all, the seeming should be the real; if He was trying them instead of their trying Him, and if He was deciding their fate when they supposed that they were decreeing His. Not unlikely; nay, very probable, if we take into account the mighty significance of the words He uttered when standing before the tribunals of earth.

In reply to the mitred persecutor's solemn interrogatory as to whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God, blessed forevermore, Jesus answers: "Thou hast said, I am the Messiah, and though ye may slay me, ye shall see me sit on the right hand of the majesty of God and coming in the clouds of Heaven." In these words He does deliberately assert the superiority we suspected, and falters not in faithfulness to His character and claims. What it is to be the Son of God may be inferred from the storm of indignation and the cries of "blasphemy" that followed His avowal. They who were thus moved could not have regarded it as equal to exalted creaturehood, but as sur-

passing it and transcending it. When Jesus is being examined by Pilate He gives utterance to some memorable words. The Roman asked whether He was "King of the Jews?" and in response our Lord, while disclaiming pretensions to earthly thrones, asserted His right to this dignity, and explained "My kingdom is not of this world." "It is a domain of truth, and all who love and keep my words—that is, who honor the truth—are my subjects." What a magnificent conception! An empire independent of territory, of palaces, of armies, and of all the outward pomp which lends glory to the empires founded by man's might and genius! A spiritual domain where all nationalities and races may unite in one grand fraternity, where all are to be united by their common devotion to truth, and where all labors shall be for the promotion of truth, and all allegiance shall be due exclusively to truth, that is, to Him who is in Himself the reality and the glory of truth. But who is He that dares aspire to the sovereignty of such a nation? What must be the character of the Being who can create such a kingdom, sway such a scepter, and inspire the needed confidence in Himself as the very substance of that which He enjoins, and the ultimate foundation of that which He creates? Pilate inquired whether He was the Son of God. He answered not, for He had previously confessed that He was, and it is only in this dignity—a dignity higher than creaturehood, the precise import of which we do not now pause to investigate—that the adequate explanation of the mystery can be found. We see, then, from these mighty assumptions, and from His entire bearing during the trial, what Jesus did with Himself. He magnified and exalted Himself even in His humanity, and disclosed His essential glory even in His shame. Yea, we likewise see what He would do with Himself. He would exalt Himself to the right hand of God; He would reign in the thoughts and hearts

of men; He would be acknowledged as the Son of the Highest; and He would at last judge the world in righteousness.

But let us inquire what Heaven has done with Him and for Him? Has Heaven justified His dealings with Himself, and has it given us reason to believe that His expectations and longings have been realized? An affirmative answer, we think, can be safely given. It is warranted by two significant facts: Providence speedily reversed the decision of the court that condemned Jesus, and fixed the stamp of its execration on the proceedings by overwhelming and punishing His judges. Let us never forget that the dishonor and discredit heaped upon Jesus continued only a short time. Though His enemies were permitted to do their worst and were permitted to enjoy their triumph for a moment, soon the reproach, like the stone at the sepulcher, was rolled away, and He was vindicated in the thought of mankind. When the angels came to perform their humble part in the resurrection, and Heaven broke the seal of the tomb, it was practically declared that the appeal which the murdered man had taken to the highest tribunal had been heard, and the unjust sentence forever revoked and canceled. Since that precious hour, what has not Providence done with Him and for Him? It has made Him the center of the world's religious hope, the Being toward whom the eyes of the helpless, the burdened and the dying are turned with loving confidence. It has exalted Him to dominion over the thoughts and lives of millions, and to greater power over the conscience than the mightiest monarch ever swayed over the body. It has given Him conquests in every corner of the world, and enabled Him to subdue the vicious and rescue the lost.

Equally significant has been its dealing with the men who accomplished His violent death. The Jewish nation became involved in political troubles which brought about

its ruin. The charge of sedition which it alleged against Jesus, a crime which in Him excited their horror, the nation itself committed. Its rulers insisted that it should be punished when Jesus was reputed the offender, and, strange to say, having encouraged the Romans to show no mercy, no mercy was shown them in the day of their transgression. According to their own judgment they were judged, and as they had meted it out to one poor, helpless being was it measured to them. As we ponder these coincidences we cannot but feel the terrific force of the words, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Repay, indeed, in the same coin, and apparently with interest. What became of Pilate we know not. He is handed over to tradition, a custodian as unreliable and unstable as himself, which never knows exactly what to do with the names committed to its care, but now testifies one thing and then another, and at last leaves everything in grim uncertainty. The way tradition has dealt with Pilate is not unlike the way Pilate dealt with Christ. "What shall I do with Jesus?" queried the Roman. "What shall I do with the Roman?" queried tradition, and straightway proceeded to consign him to sorrow and shame. He is represented as exiled by the emperor, and again as imprisoned, as committing suicide, and as reappearing in gloom at times on earth washing his blood-besmeared hands. His ghost is supposed to haunt the heights of Mount Pilatus in Switzerland, and the people who lived in the valleys many years ago saw in the clouds that foretold storms which gather round its summit the evident signs of his unresting spirit. But however vain these legends may be, at least they indicate how posterity judges his connection with the trial of Jesus, and we know beyond serious question that no further good fortune attended him after his unrighteous course. His career was arrested. We read of him no more. History chronicles no achievements and no honors

subsequent to the prostitution of his magisterial character. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that he associated his crime with the decline of his fortunes, and wandered conscience-smitten and sin-burdened to the end. Thus then Providence rescued the fair name of Jesus from the clutches of His assailants, and has exalted Him to a position of the highest honor and the sublimest influence.

In view of its decision, "What," let me ask, "should we do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" I answer: Do with Him what Providence itself has done. Defend Him from His adversaries, and, what is of more importance, exalt Him to His true place in your affections and life. Trust Him, for He is worthy; love Him, for He is deserving; follow Him, for He is all-sufficient. This is His right, this is your duty. While this will bring glory to His name, it will bring peace to your soul. Ah! remember that what you do with Him will decide what He will ultimately do with you. The decision is tremendous in results. Jesus will deal with you as you deal with Him.

"The sweet persuasion of His voice,
Respects thy sanctity of will;
He giveth day—thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still.

A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth, a sweeter hymn
May shine and sound forever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

Forever round the mercy seat
The guiding lights of love shall burn,
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the will to turn?"

XXI.

THE DENIAL OF JESUS.

And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice.—*Luke xxii, 61.*

REPEATED and violent asseverations do not always inspire confidence. One of Shakspeare's characters says of another, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks;" and the same great author writes: "'Tis not the many oaths that make the truth; but the plain single vow, that is vow'd true." Unpleasant suspicions seem to be engendered in proportion as friendship and faithfulness are pledged with full-mouthed words, windy assurances, and extravagant exclamations. History furnishes a woful number of instances in which multiplied promises and intensified professions have served as a prelude to betrayal. When Napoleon made the most gushing advances to Selim, the Sultan, so that the Moslem was drawn into war with Russia, he was arranging with the Czar for the partition of Turkish territory. Philip of Macedon was likewise loud and voluble in his denials of evil purposes against the government whose overthrow he had most at heart. And kings and princes, popes and cardinals, have generally kept their sacred honor in the inverse ratio of the vehemence wherewith it was pledged. Such was also the case with Peter. He is indignant when the Master predicts that His disciples would abandon Him, and would leave Him as the shepherd to be smitten. This reflection on their integrity Peter personally resents, and asserts confidently and unhesitatingly that though others might be

offended, he never would, and though others might deny Him, he never could; and that it were easier for him to die than to prove false. Sincere though he undoubtedly was when he thus spoke, and in this respect superior to the majority of those who protest fluently and deny easily, he did not realize that the very energy of his declamation would diminish the moral force needful for its conversion into deeds, and that the fervor expended in extreme expressions of friendship would foster presumption and blind him to the necessity of watchfulness. But what he did not perceive, Jesus did; and He put him on his guard, or tried to do so, by uttering the prediction, "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice." And yet, though thus admonished and warned, this man of many vows went the way of the false and did what he never supposed he was capable of doing.

The fall of Peter is to us as strange as to him it seemed impossible. He was no ordinary man; no weakly, effeminate soul to be swayed by every change in the social barometer. Born in Galilee, near the Sea of Tiberias, and reared to the exposures and hardships of a fisherman's lot, and accustomed to grapple with the might of the tempest, he was the last person whom we would suspect of inconstancy and fickleness. It appears incredible that he who had held his frail bark to her task with the white teeth of the billows gnashing against her, and with the stormful winds roaring around her, would deviate from his course as a follower of Christ because in the ecclesiastical sky "the storm rack rolled up ragged and brown." The impression we receive from Jesus of his character goes to increase this incredibleness. When He first saw him He called him Peter, "a rock," a significant name. He had heretofore been called Simon, a designation which imports "one who hears," and may have been conferred on him because of his attentive, studious habits; and if so, calcu-

lated to heighten our good opinion of his worth. Judged by his Epistles, though he may not have been educated in the schools, he was neither shallow-minded nor illiterate. Simon becomes Peter. As a mark of honor the Savior bestows on him this second name, perhaps to teach us that to do is better than to hear, and that to endure is nobler than to receive. Certainly it suggests the idea of strength and stability; and yet we should never forget that a stroke of lightning will rend the rock, and the earthquake's shock will overthrow the hills. The presumption is against such disastrous results, but they are clearly within the range of probabilities, and the massiveness of Peter's character renders it unlikely that he should fall, while it does not guarantee his safety. We would, however, suppose that the favor shown him by the Master would have acted as an all-sufficient restraint upon him, and would have preserved him in the hour of trial. Jesus had associated him with James and John as a witness of the more glorious and secret phases of His ministry; He had also reposed in him the fullest confidence; and had in a sense made him chief among the apostles. He it was who was to open the gates of the Heavenly Kingdom to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, and though his authority was not unshared, it was the first to be exercised, and was never to be transmitted. Such honors and dignities ought to have held him fast to his professions, but they did not. Neither his native firmness nor the Lord's favor sufficed to shield him; and from his defection we may learn, however moral, upright, and pious we may be, not to be over-confident. We, too, are in jeopardy; we, too, may depart from rectitude; and we, too, may deny the Lord who bought us. Such being the case, with more than a passing and ephemeral interest ought we to meditate this evening on the downward course of him who has been called "the Prince of the Apostles."

We are not to suppose that the fall of Peter cast not its shadow before. In the spiritual world, as in the physical, great changes come not unannounced. We may be blind to the signs, but signs there are. The most sudden tempest has been heralded, though we may have been deaf to the warning. A cloud as light as the condensed breath of infancy, unnoticed and unvalued, may harbinger a night of desolation; and some spiritual mood, some transient thought, some unaccountable uprising of lawless passion's flame may be the prophet of approaching disaster to the soul. In the case of Peter it was forecast by ebullitions of impetuosity, rashness and forwardness. When the Savior tenderly and solemnly alluded to the death that awaited Him, this headstrong apostle undertook to rebuke Him, and bluntly declared that it could not be, and thus drew on himself the sharp censure: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me." At another time, when, tossed on the familiar waters of Galilee with his brother disciples, he saw the Lord Jesus coming toward them, calmly walking on the sea, and heard Him say, "Be of good cheer, it is I," his self-confidence and recklessness led him to propose a desperate venture as a means of testing the reality of what seemed so phantom-like. He essayed to walk upon the sea; but his faith was not equal to his courage, and he would have been speedily engulfed had not Jesus interposed to save him. From these instances we can readily understand why the Lord should have looked with solicitude on the future of His servant. He saw in him qualities which, while giving promise of the highest usefulness, would, if uncontrolled, betray him into evil. And thus it often comes to pass that the most commendable traits of character, such as generousness, fearlessness, decisiveness and unsuspiciousness, may become the means of personal degradation. How frequently are the fallen credited with excellences which approach to vir-

tues, but which have become the unconscious instruments of vice. Rest assured of two things: when your warm-heartedness inclines you to fellowship with the gay and frivolous, when your contempt of peril inclines you to take risks involving moral issues, and when your self-reliance leads you to despise prudent safeguards, your nobler qualities are undermining your integrity, and the prophecy of inevitable ruin is being uttered.

The particulars of Peter's defection are likewise significant and instructive. When Jesus was surrounded in the garden by the hirelings of the priesthood, our apostle made a show of resistance and violently drew a sword, and when the Master was led away to His judges he followed Him. Up to this point, therefore, he was still loyal; and, though doubtless confused and bewildered by the events that had taken place, was sincerely desirous of doing his duty faithfully. He seems to have been aided by John, who may have had some influence with the domestics in gaining admission to the great quadrangular hall at the upper end of which Jesus was examined by Annas. The servants kindle a fire, and with several officers gather round it while the trial proceeds. Peter, perhaps to avoid observation, and especially that his concern in the scene being enacted might not be noticed, joins the group and affects the attitude of an uninterested spectator. He has allowed himself to drift into a false position. We cannot suppose that he meditated wrong, or was guilty of anything more than carelessness; and yet his inadvertency was followed by very serious consequences. The woman who had admitted him, surprised at his assumed indifference, and probably seeing through it, bluntly inquires: "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" Thrown off his guard by the question, and half conscious that he has already compromised himself, Peter meets her query with a flat denial. The lie once

spoken, it has to be backed up and made good by others. The woman repeats her question, and he repeats his denial, "I am not; I know Him not." He becomes set, dogged and stubborn, and moves toward the porch through which he entered. He is again confronted and recognized, and again he declares: "I do not know the man." For a time he seems to have been left by his tormenters, and to have regained a little of his composure, but it was not free from sullenness and slumbering anger. Unfortunately he ventured to talk, and the storm broke forth again. One said: "Did I not see thee with Him?" Another exclaimed: "Thy speech betrayeth thee." Assailed on all sides, unable to explain himself without the most humiliating of confessions, enraged at his own weakness, and enmeshed by his own untruthfulness, he whispers excitedly through his teeth: "I know not the man," and begins to curse and to swear.

Ah! brethren, how has the gold become dim! How has the most fine gold become changed! And ever will it be sullied and alloyed when men, whether moralists or Christians, place themselves in a false position. When they join the company of atheists and blasphemers, not meaning to sympathize with them, but not protesting; when they sit quietly by when virtue is being ridiculed, and utter never a disapproving word; and when they frequent questionable resorts and engage in questionable pursuits they compromise themselves and are not far from the practical repudiation of all they have professed. Suppose under such circumstances they should be confronted with the question, "Are you not Christians?" is it not probable for very shame's sake they would answer "No"? And if at such a time they should be tempted to some grave iniquity, is it not more than likely they would answer "Yes"? But while false positions should be dreaded, misstatements and misrepresentations should be abomin-

ated. One lie breeds another; and as an English writer has it, "He who tells a lie is not sensible how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more to maintain that one." He must, as Mrs. Browning says :

" Pay the price
Of lies, by being constrained to lie on still "

The defeat of Harold at Senlac was due to a chain of falsehoods; Froude has shown how multiplied misstatements surrounded Queen Elizabeth with manifold perils; and we all know that the conflicts and disasters growing out of diplomacy are mainly owing to mendacity. History furnishes on a large scale instances of the fatal succession of unveracities, and biography proves that individual lives may be involved in a labyrinth of deceit through the thoughtlessness of one dishonest word. Even slight prevarication may, like a slight bend in the road, change the direction of life's journey so that instead of extending through broad, open fields, it will be darkened by narrow gorges, and perplexed by tortuous forests. A lying spirit will be followed by lying conduct. If you are given to the one, you only lack opportunity and occasion to fall into the other. To err here is not the beginning of defection from rectitude, it *is* defection; it is itself a denial of allegiance to religion and morality, for it is diametrically opposed to both. The habit of untruth, though it may not be directed against Christianity, is virtually the rejection of Christianity, yea, and the deliberate forfeiture of Heaven; for it is written that no liar hath admission there. Unopposed, unchecked, the course is downward, and may end in cursing and swearing; for, as in the case of Peter, it brings with it embarrassments, complications, exposures, and reproaches, and oaths and blasphemies are resorted to as the only means of escaping the former and as the only available mode of answering the latter. Some-

times the profanity is less in words than in deeds. Discomfited, unhappy, mortified, the wretched victim of deceit may be guilty of the blacker profanity of dissipation or crime, or both, and at last end his inglorious career in the darkness of despair.

But such despair is not inevitable. There is deliverance even from iniquity and moral failure. Peter's life would not be worth the studying if it taught not this. Penitence is possible: forgiveness is obtainable. The wayward can be reclaimed, and the outcast may be rescued. This is the essence of the Gospel; and on this, as illustrated in the restoration of our erring apostle, we find it profitable to meditate.

There is something strikingly dramatic in the accounts given of his recovery. If we return to the judgment-hall where the denial occurred we cannot fail to be impressed by the startling coincidences and the pathetic, if not sensational, climax of the scene. Peter, having answered the portress curtly and almost savagely, moves toward the porch, and as he does so the cock crows. He may not have noticed the shrill heralding of the day, which announced as well the gathering of night about his soul, but the Master had predicted the significant connection between the sign of morning without and the darkness of evening within. Again the cock crew—immediately following the last denial—and Peter remembered the words of Jesus. There doubtless came rushing on mind and heart the recollections of his vain-glorying, his self-assertion, and self-confidence, and with them memories of the Savior's tender admonitions, faithful rebukes, and solemn prophecies. Overwhelmed by the consciousness of his folly and guilt he creeps slowly toward the door, that in congenial solitude he may hide his grief and shame; but before he crosses the threshold he instinctively turns his eyes to the tribunal before which Jesus stands. The

Master and the servant gaze upon each other though separated by many feet of distance, and yet though farther disjoined by moral differences, their eyes meet and their spirits too. "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." To the guilty man it must have seemed as though the Friend he had wounded from first to last had been observing him, had followed his actions, had heard his whispered fierce denials, and had forgotten His own peril in His solicitude for him. But much more than this must the Master's look have conveyed to Peter. We know the eloquence of the eye, how it flashes scorn and indignation, how it gleams with compassionate tenderness, how it attracts and fascinates, how it remonstrates and pleads, and how it governs savage beasts and more savage men. When the lips are dumb the eye still discourses in terms of pity or of hate; and when the hands are bound the eye still carries on the warfare, darting its sunrays, like the god Apollo, against a viperous brood of evil. How much expression there must have been concentrated in the look of Christ! Contempt for the sin, compassion for the sinner, reproach mingled with remonstrance, condemnation with commiseration, and withal affectionate solicitude for the future of His erring servant, doubtless burned and glowed in that look. As it flashed, with the speed of light, both pity and rebuke, it may also have reminded the guilty one that He who had foretold this sin had likewise promised to pray for him, and that the prayer would be answered as surely as the prediction had been fulfilled.

"I think the look of Christ might seem to say—
'Thou Peter! art thou then a common stone
Which I at last must break my heart upon,
For all God's charge to His high angels may
Guard my foot better? Did I yesterday
Wash thy feet, my beloved, that they should run
Quick to deny me 'neath the morning sun,
And do thy kisses like the rest betray?"

The cock crows coldly. Go and manifest
A late contrition, but no bootless fear!
For when thy final need is dreariest,
Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here.
My voice, to God and angels, shall attest,
Because I know this man, let him be clear.'"

Nor was the look in vain; for it is written that when Peter remembered the words of Christ, "he went out and wept bitterly." O troubled, guilty soul, thy recovery is also possible. Though the Savior in visible presence is no longer here, He seeth thee. He discerneth thy weaknesses, knoweth thy temptations, and how sorely thou hast been tried. He hath watched thy every step in evil, and hath whispered warnings by thee unheeded, and His eyes are on thee still. To-day thou heedest not His love, but the morrow may quicken thy remembrance of former innocence, of sunny, guileless hours, and happy intercourse with thy God and thy Redeemer. Some familiar strain of music echoing from the sinless past, some shadow of a dear, sweet face mutely speaking of olden and purer times, some passage from God's Word moistened with a mother's tears and perfumed with a pastor's prayers, may break in on thy hard indifference, and thou shalt realize that the Almighty seeth thee, hath seen thee in thy sin, doth see thee in thy need, and doth see to pity and forgive, and then shalt thou also go forth and "weep bitterly."

These words testify to the sincerity and depth of Peter's contrition. Tears are the stream along whose course the guilty steer for Heaven. They are the rain drops before the sunshine, and they are the iris on the cloud of wrath that speaks of hope and peace. But all-important as genuine sorrow for sin is in the conversion of the soul, it is not all. The Apostle Paul describing repentance says of it: "What carefulness it wrought in you. Yea, what

clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge!" These expressions cannot be obscure to you. They denote in general an actual turning away from the evil and an earnest, reverent, circumspect pursuit of the good. Genuine contrition is practical as well as emotional. There is, however, one term in this catalogue which may not be altogether clear. It is the word "revenge." What can be meant by classing this ill-favored word with others of a fairer face in this picture of repentance? Of course, it cannot mean that the renewed soul harbors wrath toward a fellow-being, or that it should cherish the malignant feeling that seeks to inflict injury on an enemy. The revenge here spoken of is directed toward the guilty self, not toward others. It is the spirit that hates and destroys that particular infirmity or tendency in the individual which led to or was most prominent in the transgression. Our Savior refers to it when he says: "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out"; and "if thy right hand offend thee cut it off." We have an illustration of this thought in the closing moments of Cranmer's life. He had signed a paper recanting his Protestantism, and when the hour came for him to die — for die he must, as the so-called Mother Church in Catholic Mary's days had little confidence in the penitence of heretics — the Archbishop was so deeply grieved concerning his perfidy and weakness that he determined the hand that wrote his name should be first of all his members to suffer from the flame. Tennyson represents him as speaking thus:

"The papers by my hand
Sign'd since my degradation — by this hand
Written and sign'd — I here renounce them all;
And, since my hand offended, having written
Against my heart, my hand shall first be burnt,
So I may come to the fire."

And the chroniclers of the time describe how the venerable man, when bound to the stake and the greedy flames began to roar and devour, held his poor guilty hand where it would perish, and without a cry or murmur beheld it consumed to ashes. What indignation! What revenge! Such revenge, though in a different way, took Peter on his sin. The tongue that had denied Christ he now devotes to His service; the feet that fled from His side he now sends on His errands; and speech and feet—yea, and every power of mind and body—are consecrated all to the one work of making Him known, whom in an evil hour he had said, “he never knew.” And thus must contrition ever manifest itself in acts, in forms appropriate to the sin committed. If intemperance, if lust, if hate, if avarice hath caused the sin, these particular vices must bear the brunt of the soul’s displeasure. In this way do special iniquities find special antagonists, and in this way is righteousness furthered among men. And as in all the varied phases of iniquity Christ is dishonored, and His authority treated with contempt, in every movement of reform the penitent heart seeks His glory and the recognition of His sovereign grace.

Thankful should we be that whosoever thus repents, the blessed Lord will in no wise cast out. He received Peter; He will not reject thee. To the erring apostle He sent a special remembrance when He had risen from the grave, saying, “Tell my disciples *and Peter* that I go before them into Galilee,” mentioning the name of the penitent that he might be assured of his forgiveness. Thus shall He speak to thee, my contrite brother, and assure thee individually that He has gone before thee into Heaven to prepare a place for thee. Not only did He pardon Peter completely, He also pardoned him generously. He restored him to his place among his brethren, and committed to his care the lambs and sheep of the blood-purchased flock.

In this honor others shared; but Peter would hardly have presumed to take it to himself after his great transgression. The Master therefore specially confers it, as He had once before empowered him to be a fisher of men. He will also treat thee as liberally, whether thou art backslidden disciple or wayward unbeliever, if thou dost return in penitential spirit to His throne. Offices of trust, positions of responsibility, opportunities of doing good He grants to all who seek Him that they may be useful, and that they may know they serve no churlish, suspicious Lord, but one who forgets and favors when He forgives.

Then let meek repentance, crucifying self-esteem, step forth from the ruins of fallen pride, and then the intolerable pangs of self-reproach shall cease, and humiliation attain the exaltation promised by the lips of Him whose promises are yea and amen forever.

XXII.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.

And they crucified Him.—*Matt. xxvii, 35.*

WHEN a Government or an institution has outlived its day, and is too meager and narrow to satisfy the expansive intelligence and sympathy of the people, a good thing it would be if it would gracefully and voluntarily seek to be abolished, and not wait to be hustled violently and unceremoniously into an ignominious grave. But this edifying spectacle of the dead, putrid carcass of a civilization getting itself appropriately enshrouded and entombed has rarely, if ever, been witnessed. Much oftener has the corpse of former vitalities persisted in restraining and repressing with its fleshless hand the new life of the world; and has generally only relaxed its hold when compelled to do so by social upheavals or foreign invasions, which, amid shrieks, cries, curses and groans, have trampled its worthlessness into an inglorious sepulcher. Thus the body of heroic Rome long survived the extinction of its soul, and would not cease offending Heaven with its grimaces, sumptuosities, artificialities, and its automatic and spasmodic cruelties, dissensions, and ambitions, until Hun, and Goth, and Vandal made an end of it and of them forever. Thus, likewise, monarchical France, the France of the Bourbons, whose spirit seemed to depart with Louis XIV, and which through two succeeding reigns tried by tricks, oppressions, and untruths to perpetuate itself in the face of human progress, would neither modify itself nor abrogate itself, and had to

be swept away by revolutions and the guillotine. Feudalism in Europe, slavery in America, and landlordism in Ireland, when it was discovered that they were worse than profitless, and could be dispensed with, were unwilling quietly to depart, but must needs fight it out and succumb only to that might which, in its assault on such systems, is identical with right.

And in the same way we find the Jewish nation and Jewish Church of Christ's time having gone totally blind, dumb, and deaf, declining to accept the inevitable and withdraw from the scene of action. They had formerly been great powers on the earth, had been directly governed by the Almighty, and had been messengers of eternal verities to the world; but all that was over with long before Jesus appeared. Their power was a thing of the past; and, as "God is the God of the living, not of the dead," He had departed from them, and their voices had ceased to articulate Heavenly wisdom. Though they had thus fallen into impotence, they would not relieve the earth of their presence, but insisted upon maintaining themselves at all hazards, and the result was revolts, wars, convulsions, and final collapse in blood, smoke, and flame. While this storm-doom was slowly gathering, Jesus confronted the Jewish people and faithfully told them that everything worth preserving was gone from them, swallowed up in empty formalities, idle mummeries, pretense, and show, and that, unless they abandoned their pomps and vanities, and trusted in Himself, they could hardly escape the damnation of hell. Instead of giving good heed to His words, and doing the only wise thing under the circumstances, they waxed indignant, and confirmed what He had said regarding their corruption, weakness, and heartlessness by crucifying their would-be benefactor.

How difficult it is to estimate the significance of acts or events at the time of their occurrence. They are seeds

whose nature and properties are unknown, and when planted none can tell whether they will spring up into modest flowers or mighty trees. Who would have supposed that Runnymede and Magna Charta would have grown into the liberty-loving nineteenth century? When the indignant Bostonians emptied the tea into their beautiful bay, how few among them could have foreseen the results of their conduct? When the Convention called on Citizen Bonaparte to quell the rising of Section Lepelletier, 1795, not a soul on its benches, nor the young officer himself, had the faintest imagination of the importance of the summons to them and him. With haste would the order have been countermanded could it have been anticipated that its successful execution would lead to the Empire and to the wars of Napoleon! John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame, is arrested and executed by the authorities of Virginia, and in a short time the invader is exalted to the rank of hero-martyr, and his death comes to have a potent influence on the overthrow of slavery. Cæsar, deciding to meet the Senate, is assassinated in the Capitol, and the course of Roman history is changed; Charles I, refusing the overtures of Parliament, is at length beheaded at Whitehall, and the development of England is modified; and Louis XVI, failing to improve his opportunity to escape, loses his head in the Place de la Révolution, and the growth of liberty in France is diverted and the destiny of the country radically altered. And Jesus is crucified on Calvary, and a new era is inaugurated, world-wide in its scope, and without a parallel in the annals of time. Jesus said truly regarding his enemies, "They know not what they do"; and though Caiaphas unconsciously prophesied that the Nazarene should die for the nation, he was utterly ignorant as to the mighty consequences that would follow His violent taking off. He and his colleagues could not have supposed it

possible that a gibbet would become the symbol of a new faith, that the death of a peasant would become the foundation of future theologies, and that the innocent blood they shed would be to unborn millions a sacred stream in which they should seek sin-cleansing for their souls. And yet the unexpected and unanticipated have become the actual. Verily, we understand not our own doings at the time of the doing; can neither measure their import nor issues; and as the poet exclaims,

“A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents”;

and as it is said in Hamlet,

“Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own,”

—and we need not therefore be surprised that the crime of the furious priests and fanatical people of Jerusalem turned out so amazingly different from what they purposed or desired.

What they, being, as they were, blinded by passion and hatred, could not penetrate, now in the light of evangelistic narratives and apostolic comments can be intelligently appreciated; and as it fills so large a place in the religious thought and life of the world, we may with profit inquire anew into its meaning.

In doing so, let us transport ourselves to Calvary, and note what there is about this official murder that invests it with an extraordinary character. It is early morning, and the streets of Jerusalem are thronged with excited groups who are discussing the arrest of the previous night. Jesus finds few defenders among those who so recently welcomed Him to their city with every token of confidence and joy. Perhaps here and there some man once blind, or some demoniac now restored, is not entirely forgetful of His healing mercy, and faintly protests against the outrages being committed. For the honor of

human nature let us hope this. But while some friendly voices may have been raised in his behalf—and of this we have no record—the majority of the population cried “Crucify Him,” treating Him as the Athenian rabble did Socrates, and as the Roman citizens did Coriolanus—treatment which in the latter case called forth the scornful denunciation merited by them all:

“You common cry of curs whose breath I hate
As reek o’ the rotten fens, whose love I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air.”

Those ignorant and fickle crowds in Jerusalem clamored for the innocent blood with wolfish eagerness and tigerish savageness; and, doubtless, when they heard the verdict trod upon each other in their vulgar haste to see it carried into effect. The sentence pronounced by the judges decreed a punishment of heathen origin, unrecognized by Jewish law, and of fiendish severity. The cross was an instrument of torture as well as of death. Its victim was first of all scourged with knots of rope or leather thongs, to the ends of which were fastened bits of lead, and which lacerated the body fearfully, sometimes tearing out eyes and teeth, and even inflicting death. This ordeal past, the mangled prisoner was either tied or nailed to a transverse-shaped wooden instrument, the weight of the body resting on a wooden pin or meager seat, and then the whole was lifted up, and was rudely pushed into a socket that it might stand upright. In such a position the sufferings were excruciating. The blood rushed to the head, intense pain shot through the arms and limbs, and the torn, gashed, and bleeding back, fretting against its rough support, racked the entire frame with indescribable torments. Nor was this all. The crucified one was exposed naked on the tree to the sun by day and the chills of night, and to the sharp teeth of beasts and the iron

bills of ravenous birds; and often before life was extinct these foul creatures began their loathsome orgies. Imagine a miserable fellow-being thus suspended, thus exposed, consciousness remaining, memory still active, the waves of a thousand hells surging in his soul, the discord of a thousand devils ringing in his ears, praying for death, the prayer growing into a shriek as the bloodshot eye beholds the ominous form of prowling beast and swooping bird, and you have before you an image of human agony such as only men of abnormal cruelty could consent to inflict. And yet this was the fate to which our Lord was doomed—a fate which filled enlightened men, such as Cicero, with horror, and which was rarely meted out to any, except in war, who were not the most abject and vicious of the race. Such extreme measures taken against a person as inoffensive as Jesus are not without significance. Why should He have been crucified when stoning to death was the punishment provided by Jewish law for unparalleled villainies. Was it to make Him a melancholy exception, so that the eyes of the nation, and perhaps of the world, might be drawn toward Him? The priests did not so design it, and yet it has had this effect; and hence whoever thinks of Jesus to-day thinks of Him invariably in connection with the peculiar character of His sufferings. These sufferings, likewise so unmerited and excruciating, and commonly adjudged only to crime, suggest the likelihood, as they were undeserved on His part, that the burden of human woe rested on Him, and that for some reason and in some manner He was appointed by Providence to endure what was due to the crime of others, as well as to their sin. If there should be sufficient grounds for regarding Him as an atonement, then, of course, it would follow that there was concentrated in Him the bitterness of the world's agony: and that it reached its climax on Calvary, and assumed this terrible

form that even the greatest outlaw and outcast might have hope.

The sentence has been pronounced; the Jewish Priests have retired to their exultation, and the heathen Governor to his fears, and the dismal procession moves through the northwest gate of Jerusalem to a skull-shaped knoll near the highway. There are three prisoners each bearing the transverse portion of his cross, and a placard setting forth the sin he had committed. Soldiers surround the condemned men, under the command of a Centurion, and throngs of curious and sometimes of insulting people attend and perhaps impede the solemn cortège. As it proceeds a few women press near Jesus, manifesting the deepest sorrow on His behalf; and, seeing them, He gently remonstrates with their grief, and tells them not to weep for Him but for themselves and for their children. This incident recalls the impressive and dignified bearing of Jesus during all the indignities heaped upon Him. We have seen how superior to His judges He appeared when the trial was in progress, and, now that He is at the last stage of His suffering pilgrimage, His personal greatness becomes yet more apparent. He exhibits no weakness. The belief that He stumbled beneath the weight of the cross, and that in consequence it was placed on one Simon, is a fiction due to the painters and to the stories of ignorant sentimentalists. The stumbling is not recorded in the Gospels. The section of the cross He carried was transferred to the Cyrenian, possibly because he had manifested sympathy for the forsaken one; but there is not a word about our Lord faltering or fainting. Jesus is calm and composed throughout. To the insults of His enemies He is silent, or, at most, exclaims, "Father, forgive them"; to the necessities of the robbers at His side He is gracious, seeking to guide them, that they might be with Him in Paradise; and to the love of His mother, and the faithfulness of

John, which brought them near to His bed of agony, He is affectionately tender, providing for the one and honoring the other. No word of scorn passes His lips, no flash of indignation darts from His eye; but to the last, though His soul is heavy with sorrow, and His body tortured with pain, He carries Himself as one who is conscious that He is voluntarily laying down His life, and who could, if He so willed, pluck it even then from the hands of His persecutors.

What, likewise, adds impressiveness to the scene is His apparent experience of anguish which man's power could not inflict, and which His innocent life does not explain, and which, at last, seems to be swallowed up in an unearthly victory. He cries: "I thirst;" but it seems rather to be a thirst of soul than of body. He gives utterance to the fearful exclamation, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" revealing an inner chaos and spiritual desolation unparalleled and unfathomable. And as this awful darkness gathers within, the shadows of thickest night envelop the cross without. This preternatural gloom has been regarded by many as the sympathy of external nature; but while it may have been this, yet, taken in connection with our Lord's words and with what follows, very probably it signified something more. Remember that Jesus died at the time of the Passover, the memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, when the angel passed by every house on which the blood of the lamb had been placed; and remember, also, that on the great day of atonement the priest entered within the veil and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat, and that, when the mysterious darkness about the cross was dispersed, that veil in the temple was rent, and Jesus cried with a loud, exultant voice, "It is finished!" and with calm majesty, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" This assuredly was no ordinary death. These striking

words, these strange coincidences, and portentous surroundings mark it as exceptional, and even as preternatural. The august bearing of the victim, His unaccountable despair, and subsequent triumph point to a moral grandeur and significance which separate it forever from the commonplace. Even the multitudes about the cross seem to have been thus impressed, for they rose from the contemplation of His agony, and from the presence of the darkness, with uneasy minds, and returned with silent forebodings to their homes, while the Centurion, recovering from the surprise which these extraordinary circumstances had excited, added to their dismay by crying: "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"

The traveler in Europe soon becomes familiar with the form of the dead Christ. On every side, in stately basilica, in lowly village chapel, in rocky niche hewn out of rugged mountains, and in the private apartments of the great and the boudoir of the fair and frail, he confronts the crucified. The cross is everywhere, bearing its thorn-crowned and pallid victim. It gleams in marble, appeals to the people in rudely carved, unpainted or painted wood, and frowns its horrors on them from many a wondrous canvas. Art in the past seems to have been fascinated by this one subject, and to have returned to it after its excursions in other fields with an insistency and regularity altogether phenomenal. Occasionally pictures are met with which present Jesus as the Risen One, radiant with immortal beauty; or as the awful Judge, robed in splendor, and descending amid angelic beings to the solemnities of the last tribunal. But these themes fail to inspire the artists' pencil with that ardor which appears in their frequent treatment of the crucifixion. They come back from these sublime conceptions to lavish the wealth of their genius and the strength of their skill on the gloom and agony of that tragic scene which forms the climax of gospel history. The pain-racked

body, the slow-oozing blood, the agony-contorted muscles, the ashen-hued color of the skin, the light-extinguished stare of the eyes, and the heart-grieved and soul-saddened expression of the face have more pronounced and enduring influence over them than the glories of the great white throne or the placid blessedness of the heavenly world.

Nor are they singular in this strange attachment for the somber shadows of mournful Calvary. The preachers, like the painters, and in common with the more spiritual of all ages, have concentrated mind and heart more on its suggestive darkness than on the brightest and most triumphant subject of divine revelation. They have preached it, and re-preached it, and departing from it to engage in other studies, have sought it speedily again that they might anew inquire into the meaning and point out its deep significance. Especially in seasons of religious depression, when iniquity has defiantly reared its impious head, and when the souls of men have been more than usually infatuated with sin, they have turned to the cross as expecting there to find the only potent antidote. They may have gratified their own taste, and have delighted thousands by abstruse discourses on theology; they may have rejoiced themselves and others by brilliant ethical disquisitions and by poetical and sentimental sermons on nature or on grace, the beauties of the one and the sweetness of the other; but whenever they have been unequivocally in earnest, and desired immediate spiritual results to follow their endeavors, they have abandoned everything else and have kept close to the cross. And in this they certainly copy the apostles and the entire primitive church. As we read the New Testament we cannot have failed to observe how frequently Christ as crucified is magnified. Our Lord Himself sets the example. To His disciples He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"—which He spake concerning the death

that He should die. He also urges on his hearers the duty of bearing the cross, and does so in such a manner as to create the impression that compliance is indispensable to salvation. So the apostle Paul, in addressing the Corinthians, maintains that Christ and Him crucified constitute the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. He consequently desires to know nothing else than that theme, and announces to the Galatians his settled determination to glory in that and in that alone. In various other ways this same idea is made prominent in the sacred writings, and from it we gather that it is the mind of the Spirit to center human attention and human affection on Christ; not so much on Him as risen, reigning, and rejoicing, as on Him suffering, agonizing, dying.

Why is this? Why should that which according to man's judgment is the bar-sinister on the shield of faith be thus exalted? Why should a reeking Tyburn and an ancient scaffold be made so conspicuous in a system which seeks to save, refine, and elevate? Why is the wounded, lacerated, tortured form of Jesus obtruded at all times on the thought of men? To the cry of the world for light has Christianity only shambles to offer in return? In response to the longing for visions of peace, revelations of love and beauty, why is it that we have an exhibition of savage cruelty and a repulsive picture of horrible malignancy? To answer in some adequate sense such inquiries as these is my desire; and, while I can not hope to satisfy all minds, I may at least help them toward a rational solution of a problem which they can not afford to treat with indifference.

The explanation given by the Scriptures of this phenomenal death is expressed by the word "atonement." They imply a resemblance between the ceremonial offerings and the sacrifice of Jesus. As they were presented publicly,

so was Jesus; as they were slain, so was Jesus; as their blood was carried within the veil, and the reconciliation was completed there alone with God, so the perfecting of Jesus' suffering-work took place in the thick darkness, alone with the Father; and, as they effected deliverance for all who were guilty of ceremonial defilement, so Jesus has wrought out salvation for all who have committed moral transgression. As I stand here, I can picture to myself that solemn day which was set apart by Israel for reconciliation, and I can see the high priest in his white garments of humility, having slain the victim, entering into the holiest of all to sprinkle the blood of expiation before the mercy seat, while the people, moaning over their sins, are prostrate without. A hush rests on the assembly, broken only by the wailings of the penitent, and the heart-sobs of the contrite. What does it all mean? Why do the multitudes rise with so much joy when the priest reappears and extends his hands in benediction? What have they received? In what are they advantaged? Let us ask yonder smiling Hebrew as he is returning to his tent. "Do you not understand it?" he inquires, and adds: "This is the day of atonement; our sins have been put away through sacrifice, and the nation is once more at peace with God." "But, friend, are we to believe that these poor offerings can cancel and purge moral guilt?" To which he answers: "No; these cleanse from ceremonial defilement; but they also assure us that He will come who will cleanse us from all sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Yea, verily, and if not, then the world has been befooled by these sacred institutions and has been educated to expect a Savior when no such gift was ever contemplated. Let who may believe this, I cannot. If the Bible does not teach the reality of atonement, then it is a jumble of incoherent and meaningless sayings, hardly worth the study bestowed upon them. This, however, is more in-

credible than the doctrine in question, and is not for a moment to be entertained.

As the High Priest, this is the work which Christ performs. Think it not strange that suffering should be needful to salvation. Remember that transgression carries with it agony and anguish. There is no exception. Suffering treads upon the heels of sin, ultimately overtakes it, and wraps the guilty in its embrace. Does not this intimate relation create a probability that some kind of painful sacrifice will be involved in the measures adopted for deliverance? And is not the supposition strengthened by the fact that every step of progress has left behind it a bloodmark, and every onward movement, whether social, political, or religious, been accomplished through sore travail of soul and body? I know how difficult it is to define the atonement; how inadequate words are to express the meaning of the mystery. We may, however, accept the representations of the Scriptures and rest in them. They testify: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" and "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." This then is what the Savior has done, and does for us. Before the mercy seat He stands and intercedes, and, knowing how to sympathize with us, urges His petition on our behalf. Yea, from the heavenly glory He looks down upon our low estate, and, like the Jewish priest returning from the holy place, gently breathes His gracious benediction on our souls. Hence, we find Him saying: "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many;" "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you;" "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd

giveth His life for the sheep;" "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;" and "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." By His immediate followers He is also spoken of as bearing the sins of the world. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!"

"He was once offered to bear the sins of many," and, it is said, "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." To which may be added the following inspired declarations: "When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God;" and "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." These passages constitute the merest fraction of the testimony on this subject, as set forth in the Bible; but, if they are accepted, then the death of Jesus was in some vital sense necessary to the world's redemption from sin and evil; and, if this is true, we have not only an adequate account of its extraordinary and otherwise inexplicable features to which I have alluded, but also an elucidation of that Providence which permitted the shameful end. Nay, more, we are enabled by this view of Christ's death to understand why the sacred writers should glory in the cross, which in itself suggests only ideas of ignominy; why they should insist on preaching Christ crucified as the sum and substance of saving truth; why such preaching has in reality proven the power of God unto salvation, reclaiming the degraded and rescuing the imperiled; why the sacrificial system of the Jewish economy passed away, and why no other religion has arisen with altars, priests, and bloody offerings since the completion of our Lord's ministry, though up to that time they were inseparable from every form of worship. All this is explicable on the assumption that Jesus died

for our redemption; for, if such is the case, well may the sign of that fact, however degraded in itself, become the symbol of our assuring faith; well may the declaration of that fact form the essential feature of our teaching; and well may all efforts to furnish expiatory mediation cease, when we find that that which was wrought on Calvary two thousand years ago, whatever captious criticism and railing rationalism may say about it, actually possesses the efficacy of a veritable atonement to pacify the conscience and purify the heart.

Much has been brought forward of late, in the name of so-called advanced religious thought, against this explanation of Christ's death. But some of the objections urged are idle, because they merely bear on man's representations of the subject, which, confessedly, may be inadequate and even contradictory; others are grounded in a total misrepresentation, growing, as we trust, out of an honest misconception of the doctrine; others have been repeatedly answered, and the few that cannot fairly be replied to are not specially dangerous, as they belong to a class which are as potent against theism as against orthodoxy. These objections I shall not undertake formally to discuss. Yet I may be permitted to observe that the atonement of Christ does not necessitate the belief, though its enemies affirm to the contrary, that God took an innocent person, almost against His will, and sent Him to suffer for our sins, and that in this manner He quenches the wrath-spirit in His own breast. No; the Savior freely came, came as freely and gave His life as freely as ever martyr-saint or hero-patriot surrendered for truth or liberty the life-blood of his heart. When such self-forgetting devotion on the part of man shall need apology, then, and not till then, will it be necessary to vindicate the Savior's offering of Himself. It may, likewise, be well to remark in passing that the efficacy of the atonement may not

after all, consist in satisfying an imagined Divine and vindictive yearning for the infliction of penalty on the transgressor. As I apprehend the subject, the atonement saves, not because it appeases wrath, but because it meets the Divine craving for righteousness. The Almighty is not to be regarded as an infuriated and exacting judge, destitute of mercy, reluctantly granting deliverance, only on condition that somebody endures the punishment, but rather as a Father desiring the triumph of righteousness in the universe, the supremacy of righteousness in His government, and the dominion of righteousness in the hearts of His creatures. The atonement is a measure of righteousness, righteous in its inception, righteous in its aim, and righteous in its influence. Taking the place of the sinner, Jesus voluntarily submits to the retributive forces at work, which have been set in motion by transgression, and thereby vindicates the Divine justice, which has decreed pain as the consequence of wrong-doing; He lives the life of righteousness under awful conditions of suffering, and thereby satisfies the Divine yearning for righteousness in man; and being under no obligation, as He was essentially Divine in Himself, to fulfill the law originally imposed on humanity, being, in a word, greater than the law, and yet keeping it in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, He acquires a merit on account of which God can safely pardon the ungodly, especially as the influence of this atonement on the heart of the guilty race is such as to incline it positively toward personal righteousness. Thus, in a sense, He satisfies justice, in a sense bears the penalty due our sins, and yet not in such a sense as to countenance the view, against which so much indignation is expressed, that His suffering obedience was directly designed to glut the Divine vengeance. According to our theory, it will be seen that the death of Christ was in reality only the climax and completion of this atonement, that which gathered

into itself, concentrated and expressed, the character, circumstances and agonies of His life, and without which the life would have been inadequate to save. Moreover, I may be allowed to add, however strong at times the other and usual objections of our adversaries may appear, they are entirely destitute of Scriptural support. The Bible is not only in sympathy with evangelical thought on this subject, but also, as Rogers intimates, nine-tenths of it must be sponged out, and the mass of it be reduced to a *caput mortuum* of lies, fiction and superstition, to render it of any service on the other side. What such a carefully-dried, wind-bleached death's-head of a Bible may testify cannot be of much value in shaping our views on this or any other topic. We have no heart for doctored evidence, and as the Oracles on which we rely for religious instruction sustain what is known as the orthodox theory of Christ's death, we cannot but subscribe to it, and rest in it implicitly.

It may perhaps help to justify this faith in the minds of some who are skeptical if I briefly show that, while in some aspects it is transcendently alone, it is essentially a higher and sublimer form of laws and principles that are operative in human life and human history. I need hardly remind you that sacrifice is inseparable from progress. Wherever we see good achieved, we may rest assured that suffering has been endured; and, as a rule, they who enjoy the good are not those who endure the suffering. We are vicariously related to each other. Parents pay the price in toil and pain of those possessions which descend to their children; and patriots, explorers and investigators of one generation secure, at the cost of ease and pleasures, the advantages which enrich another. Ought it, therefore, to be thought a thing incredible for Jesus to purchase with His blood the spiritual benefits which we inherit? We think not, even though the operation of the principle in

this case may in some respects vary from its usual action. Such deviation would not necessarily be a violation, and would naturally be determined by the nature of the interests to be conserved, and would be justified by their importance. Furthermore, it should be remembered that we are all sin-bearers in the sense that the consequences which follow the deeds of one often pass over to another. You may quarrel with the rectitude of this arrangement, but do not forget that your quarrel is not primarily with the Bible; it is with Nature; for it is unquestionably a law of Nature. Whatever difficulty there is in it is not peculiar to the doctrine of atonement, but to the scheme of God's government. Of its reality there can be no doubt. Your own lives bear witness to it, and it has frequently been illustrated in history. For instance, Carlyle shows how Louis XVI, himself a most blameless personage, had to bear the awful consequences of iniquities and oppressions committed by his ancestors and predecessors in his great office. They had trampled on the rights of the people, they had been selfish and cruel, and the result was a storm, whose fury spent itself on the head of their unfortunate descendant. The same may be said of the unhappy Charles I of England. He likewise was born in the evil days of retribution. If the tribulations which befell him had befallen his royal father, the vainglorious James, or his Tudor relatives, Elizabeth and Henry, we would have recognized the eminent fitness of the arrangement; but he was a worthy gentleman, believing too much in the divine right of kings, and was far from deserving the disasters which crushed him. The vices of former reigns prepared the ax by which he lost his head. As he had lived, so he died, royally. Marvell sings:

“He nothing did or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye

The ax's edge did try,
Nor Heaven invoked with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right."

Ah! if rulers have been compelled to suffer for the sins of their sires, there cannot be anything very unreasonable or strange in Jesus bearing the curse of the law which the race has violated! Of course, the cases are not precisely analogous, but they are sufficiently alike to show that the same principle underlies both. These kings paid the penalty unwillingly, Jesus willingly; He coming to meet it as it had to be met, from choice, and out of love for the perishing; and they suffered for transgressions past, but He for sin past, present and to come. The motive which influenced Him, the salvation of humanity, and the spirit that inspired Him, love for man, combined with the dignity of His person and the freedom of His volition, differentiate His sacrifice from theirs, and impart to it a meritoriousness and, consequently, an efficacy which theirs did not possess. But they agree in this—that each bore what was due the guilt of others—and this agreement relieves the atonement from the imputation of fancifulness or unreasonableness, while the difference exalts it to a station by itself and entitles it to the rejoicing confidence of a sin-burdened world.

PART II.

But the question will be asked at this point, How could pre-Christian communities have been saved, when no provision appears to have been made for their redemption? Christ's death did not occur until the world had grown old, and if its atoning character is to be admitted, then it must follow that no one could have been delivered from sin and penalty prior to the Lord's coming and the completion of His suffering ministry. If the atonement is indispensable to eternal life, it is argued, there seems no

escape from the inference that all the unhappy multitudes who existed before the crucifixion must have miserably perished. This is the usual form of the objection brought against the doctrine I have attempted to defend, and its gravity cannot be disputed. That it is regarded as formidable is evident from the theories advanced by theologians and ecclesiastics in explanation of the difficulty. They conceive of an intermediate, purgatorial state in which the spirits of the pre-Christian populations were confined, and represent the Lord as descending among them, after His death, to proclaim redemption through His blood; or they fall back on a complicated and deeply mysterious doctrine of Divine decrees, which, assuming that a certain number from all ages are to be saved, irrespective of any endeavor on their part, accounts very easily, if not very satisfactorily, for the eternal felicity of those who were ordained to live under a dispensation less spiritual than our own. I cannot, however, subscribe to these explanations, chiefly because I look upon them as unscriptural, and am constrained to seek in a different manner an adequate reply. Such a reply I will attempt to give, formulated in three distinct propositions, the discussion of which will, I hope, lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

I. *The foundation of salvation is substantially the same in all ages.* This is the first of these propositions—first in order of importance as in order of logic. Christ Jesus is uniformly presented by the New Testament writers as the world's Redeemer. This dignity He shares with no other being in the universe, and to none other are sin-smitten souls directed to look. The apostle declares that "there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all;" and with great boldness Peter taught: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

God is said to have given Him for the world, and that "He was in Him, reconciling the world to Himself." That this gracious purpose contemplated more than the multitudes who should believe on Him subsequent to His appearance in the flesh is evident from the fact that His atoning death is spoken of as having a backward as well as a forward efficacy. It is so represented as to create the impression that past, present, and future alike, partake of its merits and its benefits. Thus, in the Epistle to the Romans, we read that God hath set Christ forth "to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." And, similarly, in Paul's letter to the Hebrews, it is stated that "for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament, that, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." In both of these passages the reflex action of the Lord's sacrifice is made very prominent and very clear. According to their joint testimony the Savior dies, not merely to atone for the iniquities of the living and the unborn, but for the sins of the uncounted multitudes, who had already swept from the unseen across the bosom of earth to the unseen again. They make the cross the very center of hope, and regard it as comprehending in its saving purpose all generations as well as all conditions of mankind. The same idea seems to be involved in the comparison instituted between Jesus and Melchisedec, the latter of whom, being made "like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest forever;" while the former "is a priest forever," "made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." That is, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," he perpetually intercedes for humanity. Take this thought in connection

with Peter's declaration, that the Lamb, by whose precious blood we are redeemed, was verily "foreordained before the foundation of the world," or as John put it, was "slain from the foundation of the world," and you cannot fail to see in how wide a sense he "tasted death for every man." (See *I Tim. ii, 5; Acts iv, 12; Rom. iii, 25; Heb. ix; Heb. vii, 3, 16, 17; I Peter i, 19; Rev. xiii, 8, and Heb. ii, 9.*)

This view is perfectly reconcilable with any proximately correct theory regarding the nature of atonement. If it is looked on as a compensatory measure, a *quid pro quo* principle, as a kind of equivalent of the penalty due the transgressor, it can readily be understood how it satisfies for moral debts already incurred rather than for those not yet contracted. That is, its retrospective action is more comprehensible to thought than its prospective. When one man undertakes to meet the liabilities of another, we have no difficulty in understanding the matter; but how shall we provide for obligations that may be dishonored in the future? If it is said in reply that he can lay up in advance a contingency fund, while that is conceded, nevertheless, it still remains true that the liquidation of existing or past indebtedness is a simpler process than to arrange beforehand for the extinction of what is not already owed, and whose precise sum cannot accurately be computed. If a different conception of the atonement prevails, if it is conceived of as a magnificent demonstration of righteousness, as a sublime exhibition of God's attitude toward sin, designed to honor the law, and to provide for the exercise of mercy, compatibly with the integrity of government, then the element of time can have little to do with its efficacy. As far as we can see, on this supposition its relation to the moral order of the universe would have been as completely served had it been offered at the dawning of human history, as at its noontide hour.

Its delay for four thousand years could not in this respect have rendered it more potent, and the reason for its being thus deferred must be sought in another direction. The Bible alludes to the atonement as being effected "once for all, at the end of the world," or age, and as being presented "in the fullness of time;" and we may infer from these declarations, that it was delayed on man's account; that he might by a previous training be prepared to receive it, and that he might, through its historical connections, be enabled to prove its reality. But whatever may be said in explanation of this point, one thing is evidently clear, that on any theory of the atonement, its sufficiency as a ground of pardon is not dependent on the time in which it became a fact of history.

II. *The means of salvation are virtually the same in all ages.* Understand me, I do not claim that they were as ample, as transparent, or as complete prior to the advent of Christ as they have been since. They, like everything else, have been subject to the law of development, and have even made advances during the centuries that have succeeded the day of Pentecost. If truth is a means of grace, no one can doubt but that it is more widely spread, and more generally known in our age than it was in that of the apostles. We have more Bibles, and they are more diligently studied than ever before, and I do not think it is much to hazard, when I venture the assertion, that their meaning is more clearly discerned. But, while I grant all this, I must still insist that the means of salvation were virtually the same in ante-Christian times as they are at present.

The evidence of this is furnished by our Lord Himself. On one occasion he said to the Jews: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me;" and in His conversation with the disciples after His resurrection it is related of

Him that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." During His farewell interviews He refers to the things "that were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning" Himself. As the New Testament had no existence when this language was uttered, He necessarily had reference to the Old, and distinctly taught that it was designed to be a revelation of Himself. We know that the writings which we call "the Gospels" are full of Christ, of His person, and His work, and that they are the means by which we are led into all truth concerning Him; but in these words of our Savior the same things are affirmed of the older Scriptures, and at their heart we are assured that the Gospel dwells, as a rich jewel may flash from the center of a curious, antique setting. This thought is also repeated by the apostles. Paul declares that the Jewish ceremonial was a shadow, of which Christ was the body; and substantially states the same thing when he says that "the law," the ritual law, "was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The rites observed by the Israelites were pictures, symbols, sacred hieroglyphics of the sacrifice and priestly functions of the one Mediator. They exhibited them to the eye, and constantly reminded the worshiper of the only way of approach to God. Once each year, on the solemn day of atonement, the mystery of redemption was enacted before the people, and encouraged them to hope for the approaching time when these foreshadowings should cease with the death of Him, "who should put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." In his letter to the Hebrews this same apostle, speaking for the Messiah, exclaims, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me;" or, as the term "volume" is sometimes rendered, "the head"—at the very beginning of revelation it is written of me. But what do we find then? Turn to

Genesis and read: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." And from the hour when this promise was given we find repeated allusions, increasing in clearness, to the Messiah. The covenant made with Abraham, we are told, was a covenant in Christ. Of Him the psalmist sang, and to Him with yet greater directness Isaiah pointed, especially in that chapter where he minutely portrays His sufferings. Daniel also describes the coming prince, "who should be cut off, but not for Himself;" and Malachi presents Him as suddenly appearing in the temple, or as rising like the sun with "healing in his wings." (See *John v*, 39; *Luke xxiv*, 27, 44, 46; *Col. ii*, 17; *Heb. x*, 7, 9; *Gal. iii*, 14, 17; *Gen. iii*, 15; *Isa. iii*; *Dan. ix*, 26, and *Mal. iii*, 2.)

And thus, as in geology, we discern the footprints of the Creator, growing more and more distinct as we approach the human period; so in Revelation the presence of Christ becomes more and more apparent as we draw near to the boundaries of the present era. The Gospel in the Old Testament and the Gospel in the New are but as the two pinions of the bird that bear its body high above the earth, exalting the Mediator before the eyes of the ages far beyond the range of the ceremonial and the formal. Nor are we to conclude that the Gentile nations were left wholly in the dark regarding the great principle underlying redemption. They also recognized the fact that it rested on an atonement. The idea was more or less corrupted among them, but nevertheless they discerned it, and embodied it in their sacrifices. How they came by it no one can tell. The origin of bloody and vicarious offerings is lost in antiquity. Most likely it may be traced to some primeval revelation of which no record remains, and which spread with the dispersion of the race. But of its universality there can be no doubt. Even Voltaire admits that "among so many different religions there

is none whose main object has not been propitiation. Man has ever felt that he needed pardon." Nägelsbach treats at length of substitutionary offerings among the Greeks, and Cæsar, writing of the Gauls, testifies that "they devote themselves to death," as they believe that "unless life is rendered for life the immortal gods cannot be appeased." Throughout Egypt the same doctrine prevailed, and the Hindoo Savior, Gautama, is represented as exclaiming, "Let all sins that have been committed in this world fall on me that the world may be delivered." Unto them, therefore, the essential principle of the Gospel was preached as well as unto us, although it was associated with other than the true and only victim.

Nor were they totally ignorant of morals and of their authority. Blending with much that is degrading and polluting, we find in their writings many ideas that exalt and purify. So generally is this the case that we need no further proof of Paul's declaration that "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it unto them," than these ennobling ideas furnish.

But the means of salvation are not exhausted with the revelation of grace. That gift is supplemented by the influence of the Holy Spirit. While His ministry is more prominent and potent than in the past, let us not suppose that it was never known until the present. Among the Hebrews His presence was frequently recognized, and they as frequently implored His blessings. "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," was the cry of David, and that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" is the testimony of the apostles. Divine interposition was also assured to the Jews by the appearance in their midst of that mysterious being, called the Angel of the Covenant. He it was who wrestled with Jacob, who spoke with Moses out of the burning bush, who led the people through the wilderness, who stood before Joshua at Jeri-

cho, who encouraged Gideon, who blessed Manoah, and who was announced by Malachi. But the Angel of the Covenant spoken of by that prophet was none other than the Messiah. And it is now very commonly believed that He who in angelic form claimed to be the "I Am," in whom was the Divine name, who, when He guarded the Hebrew children in the furnace, appeared like unto the son of man, was none other than the Logos, the Second Person in the sacred Triad. (*See Gen. xxxii, 24-29; Exod. iii, 2-4; Exod. xxiii, 22-24; Acts viii, 30-53.*) "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," exclaimed the ascending Christ; and so was His presence with His ancient people sometimes manifested, but ever felt by the influence of His Spirit. And when I read on the part of devout pagans the recognition of a superhuman and invisible guide enlightening their judgments and affecting their hearts; when I recall what Plato says of Socrates, that he regarded "virtue as the fruit of a divine dispensation," and what he says concerning his own conviction, that we are saved from temptation only by divine inspiration, I cannot believe that they were wholly destitute of heavenly influences. No; that Infinite Spirit, who is with us now, who revealed Himself to the Jews, I am sure had more to do with the high thoughts and with the noble lives of pagan worthies than is generally supposed.

III. Another and final proposition must be added to complete the outline of this subject; it is this: *The conditions of salvation are practically the same in all ages.* Are we commanded in the New Testament to repent? That is, are we commanded to hate our sins, turn from our sins, and devote ourselves to righteousness? Both these solemn requirements are as conspicuous in the Old. There we find God promising His favor to those who, having done wrong, return to Him with sincere contri-

tion. Hence, David exclaims, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Isaiah, as the mouth of God, proclaims, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Nor was this penitence a mere form, as we may infer from these passages. The people were expressly commanded "to rend their hearts, not their garments," "to seek good and resist evil" and "to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with their God." Nowhere is there exhibited a more intense passion for personal righteousness, or a deeper appreciation of its value than in the Old Testament. The fiftieth Psalm is a comment on this ethical attitude; and whoever reads it must be convinced that God's holy will was then guarded against the workers of iniquity, even as now the gates of the kingdom are closed against those who walk in the ways of evil.

The Savior and His disciples not only preached repentance, they especially magnified faith as the source of righteousness, and as the one condition of eternal life which comprehended all the others. But Abraham is represented as having exercised that faith, and throughout the Old Testament there is remarkable stress laid upon its value. "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate;" "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed;" "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee;" "The just shall live by faith," are a few of the passages which enrich the prophetic pages, and illustrate how closely the saints of antiquity were allied to those of more modern times. (*See Deut. xxx, 1-5; Psalm xxxiv, 8; Isa. lxvi, 2; Job xi, 14, 15; Amos v, 14, 15; Psalm xv; Gal. iv, 21-23; Psalm xxxiv, 17-22; Psalm cxxv, 1; Hab. ii, 4.*)

It is not to be inferred that the faith that saved in the pre-Christian period was entirely identical with that which is now enjoined. If no other difference is discernible, this at least is apparent, that the Israelites "believed in Him who should come after," while we believe in Him who has already come. Their faith was prospective and prophetic, while ours is retrospective and historical. Moreover, they must differ in another sense. The Jews could not see how all their hopes were to be fulfilled, how their scriptural shadows could be converted into realities, and in what manner Jehovah Himself would be associated with the perfecting of redemption. But all this is clear to us. In Christ all has been explained and manifested, and our faith thus grasps in its object the wondrous truths of eternal life. Yet in their essence there is an identity that must not be overlooked. In their last analysis they both recognize the Almighty as the supreme dispenser of spiritual gifts, and acknowledge that His saving grace is rendered available through an atoning sacrifice.

May we not also believe that among the pagan nations many complied with these conditions? "Of a truth," said Peter, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him,"—a statement I do not think he would have made, if all the pagans had perished. Paul indignantly disdains the imputation that he taught that Jehovah "was the God of the Jews only," and in another place declares "that the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." (*Acts x, 34, 35; Romans iii, 29; x, 12.*) While it is not to be overlooked that these nations undoubtedly did corrupt their way on the earth, and never were as advantageously situated as the Jews in regard to religious light, yet from these inspired intimations we may believe that many of these people did call upon the invisible God, did mourn their

waywardness, repenting of their iniquity, and did trust Him to provide an atonement for their sins. And if this was so, although they came far short of the standard now established, and though their faith differed from ours, even as the faith of the Jews likewise differed, and though from many points of view it may have been defective, yet it was *faith*, and as it led them to do what they could, according to the light that was in them, and according to the fundamental principles underlying the scheme of redemption, we may hope to meet them in the heavenly glory, and to lift up our voice of praise in company with saintly pagans saved through the blood of the Lamb.

Men and women, thus inadequately have I tried to set before you the significance and world-wide efficacy of our Savior's death. Important reflections are suggested by our treatment of this theme; and among them not the least is the necessity for each man accepting Christ for himself. This is your duty. There must be personal reliance on His grace if there is to be personal salvation. What is to be your decision to-day? Will you crucify afresh the Lord of Glory by persistent rejection, or will you accept Him and rest in Him forever? The world is still very much like Calvary. As the Christ was there nailed to the tree and ridiculed, so here and now the atonement is mocked and derided. I would have the world like Heaven, where we behold a lamb as though it had been slain, adored and loved. There the slain Jesus—now alive, and alive forever—is the center of admiring millions. Here, likewise, as the atoning Lord, should He be trusted and gratefully worshiped. And if the anthem of the angelic and saintly hosts, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," can only be converted to song in our poor human lives, Heaven itself shall begin below; and as the song is chimed by nations, tribes and kindreds, Heaven shall spread over all the earth, filling it with purity, peace and

praise. Ponder the specific blessings which flow to the soul from His measureless grace and love. If motives are needed to quicken faith, look for them in those particular benefits which stream with His blood, and which fertilize and beautify man's spiritual nature. What these are may be learned at the foot of the cross. They are revealed to us in the words which fell from Christ's lips on Calvary. There spake He as never man spake, and in His exclamations, His petitions, His admonitions and ejaculations, we have unfolded the fullness of the Gospel. I call attention to these last sayings, not in the order of their utterance, but in the order of our experience, that you may perceive what His grace confers on the world. One of the most pathetic of our Lord's sayings, and one that is full of meaning, is His cry, "I thirst!" Such is the condition of humanity—feverish with a thirst which the waters of shoreless oceans can never quench. In every department of life, amid the strife, competition, agitation and hurly-burly of society, these words ring out. Men are parched, consumed by insatiable desires, and panting as the hart after the water-brooks. "I thirst," cries the politician, as he presses toward the spring of power; "I thirst," shrieks the money-getter, as he struggles toward the mine of wealth; "I thirst," echoes the devotee of fame and the mad seeker of pleasure. They thirst; but they are never satisfied with the miry floods of whose fullness they try to drink. But He who suffered on Calvary, the smitten rock, yields the waters of life whereof if a man drink he shall never thirst. Religion satisfies our longings, tempers our desires, and imparts to us the secret of holy and perpetual calm. But it confers another gift. When in the supreme agony of His soul's passion our Savior startled Heaven and earth by inquiring: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" for a moment He seems to have experienced what is the common lot of man, that alienation from the Highest

which is his bitter inheritance. Many in this congregation, while intellectually convinced of the Divine existence, know nothing of His presence or His influence. They are not conscious that He is near them, and that He is ready to help and comfort. To them God is a name, not a reality. But when Christianity is truly received, this separation ends. God dwells with, yea, in the believer, and he walks with Him in sweetest fellowship. The saint communes with Him, and rejoices that he cannot depart from His presence. This is, indeed, a great blessing, and one that deserves to be classed with the grace of pardon which also proceeds from the cross. Jesus prayed, as His eyes rested on His fierce and deadly enemies: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;" and that which He sought He now bestows; for He is exalted "to give repentance and remission of sins." Is not this sense of pardon which is imparted to the conscience of the highest moment, and must it not tend to lighten the heart and brighten it with peace! Whoever looks unto Jesus shall receive this gift, and whoever receives it will feel a sense of new relationships formed between him and the world. This brings us to another of Christ's suggestive sayings. He said to His disciple John: "Behold thy mother," referring to Mary, and to Mary he said: "Behold thy son!" referring to John. This favored woman and this honored man were not bound to each other by the ties which these terms express, and yet he was to be to her a son, and she was to be to him a mother. Blessed grace of religion! which lifts us above and beyond the narrow range of family, sect and nationality, and constrains us to recognize a brother, a sister, a mother, in every human being. Thus are we related to the world; thus all the earth becomes kin to the real child of God, and he seeks with parental tenderness to cherish humanity, and, with filial love, to serve and honor it. These are certainly great blessings—the thirst quenched,

sins forgiven, God restored, humanity made sacred to us; and to these may be added others, those expressed in our Lord's words, "It is finished," and "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The Master, when after the reign of darkness He cried out "It is finished," rejoiced to have emerged into light, and to have the evidence of His victory. Though on the cross and abandoned by men, and having apparently failed, He clearly discerns that He has conquered. Thus man by nature is in darkness. He does not understand life, and he does not enjoy it. To him it is night, and he feels that it is at best a dreary failure. But when the light of lights streams in upon his soul; when he acknowledges Jesus, he realizes that the mystery is over, that he has discovered the secret of existence—that the problem is solved, and he, too, rejoicingly shouts "It is finished." And, like his Savior, when the tragedy of time is over, and the grave opens its arms to receive him, he also shall see a Father's face bending over him in love, and confidently be able to exclaim: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

From our study of this doctrine we may likewise learn to cherish the thought that Christianity is not a novelty; that it is as old as eternity, in whose bosom it was born, and from whose mysteries it emerged. The forms it has assumed have varied with the necessities of the race, but its essence, like its source, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Hence we preach to you no new religion, born of yesterday, and perishing to-morrow; no religion fresh with the youth of two thousand years, but strong with the vigor of a dateless life. We preach to you no modern Savior, who first cared for humanity twenty centuries ago; but one who was before the light, yea, one who was before the darkness, who reigned when anarchic chaos heaved its turbulent billows, and rested in the eternities long before the heavens were hung to veil His

glories. It is no novice that is exalted in thousands of pulpits as the world's hope to-day, but One who has been gathering to Himself from every nation, from every clime, ever since Eden withered beneath the shadow of sin, a mighty company to be the witnesses of His grace forever. And if He has redeemed so many in the past, we may well believe that there is no condition, state, or degree now beyond the reach of His saving wisdom. He who could find a way to the pagan's heart, who could penetrate the Jew's exclusiveness, the Greek's conceit, and the malefactor's guilt cannot surely fail to rescue still the cultured and the ignorant, the high and the low, the righteous and the unrighteous.

Let us not, therefore, judge our religion unworthily. Let us not lay undue stress on the perishable outward form, and magnify it above the unchangeable spirit. Let us not think of Christianity as though it were an experiment, or as though there were some things too hard for it to accomplish. There is no one in this congregation or in the world of whom we should despair as long as its grace exists; and there is no sufficient reason for fearing that its grace will cease. Having encountered so many perils, having overcome so many difficulties, having withstood so many enemies, we may well believe that it will advance forever. But should its outward forms decay, should its influence waver, should its churches be forsaken, its Christ would still abide. His work would still go on. The past is the guarantee that in the future He who has been the Savior of the ages will be their Savior to the end.

“He reigns above, He reigns alone;
Systems burn out and leave His throne;
Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall
Around Him, changeless amid all!
Ancient of days, whose days go on!”

XXIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
Luke xxiv, 39.

TO me there is no sight more pathetic than a new-made grave. The little hillock, covered with swift-withering flowers, is to mourning hearts who have mortal treasures buried there a sublimer object than the Appalachian or Himalayan mountain ranges. It lifts our thoughts to Heaven, raises us to the unseen, and enlarges our spiritual horizon as the most towering of Nature's rugged solitudes never can. The loftiest summits of the earth are sadly gloomy; for, after all our labor to attain them we but reach a region of rocky barrenness or of snowy cheerlessness, and keenly feel that the end of the struggle is only waste and desolation. But a grave is sadder still. It is the mournful termination of human toil. There we behold anew the apparent futility of man's careful scheming, hot ambitions, strenuous exertions; of his grasping, worrying, fighting, weeping, cursing, hoping and fearing. All are smothered in the dust; and the narrow charnel-house is the wretched, disappointing goal of much-promising and ever-alluring life. But of all the solitary sepulchers wherein have lain the bodies of the great or good, none have equaled the solemn melancholy of the lonely tomb excavated in the hillside near Jerusalem, where Jesus rested after his crucifixion. The mists of evening gathered gently around it; the soft-eyed stars and pale-faced moon gleamed tenderly

upon it; the full-orbed sun glowed with cherubic splendor above it; the mail-clad soldier paused silently before it; while sorrowful ones in upper chambers, and in dark retreats, thinking of it and of Him who slept within, whispered to each other, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Ah! what despairing grief these words reveal! Not all the sympathy of the night, nor the garish homage of the day, nor echoing clank of armed guard, could divert the distracted and desponding thoughts of the bereaved disciples from the expectations which had been shattered by envious death, and from the dreams which had crumbled into dust. This to them was the end. The throne of their Beloved had disappeared in a tomb; His regal robes had changed to a dreary shroud; His empire had shriveled to the narrow dimensions of a grave; and the grim tyrant grinned mockingly over the seeming discomfiture and failure of those gracious plans for man's salvation, in which His followers had confided only to be deceived.

Ah! weeping souls, be not faithless, but believing. Lo! from the distant South, with gleeful and giddy wing, the birds return, the fragile flowers, with radiant hues and aromatic breath, revive from winter's cold embrace; and from fragrant climes the gentle winds come back, laden with odors sweet and quickening warmth: and thus may Jesus thrust aside the gateway of His clammy prison, and reappear to His rejoicing saints, bearing from the realms of the invisible sweet messages of immortal blessedness. And thus He came and thus He conquered; for, as the Paschal sun arose above the chill and fogs of somber night, filling earth with lustrous beauty, so on that morning Jesus ascended from the realms of death and dispersed the awful gloom that enshrouded the moral world. Thus He resumed His power, recovered His challenged rights, regained His waning influence, reasserted His sacred gran-

deur; and, answering thus His malignant and mean accusers, sent echoing down the ages the blest assurance that there is something in the universe higher than its inexorable laws—namely, a Christ, who could not be holden of them, but triumphed over them.

At this point began the victorious progress of the Church. She had found the explanation of the Cross, the interpretation of the shame, the meaning of the passion; yea, and had obtained new insight into the mystery of death itself, and thus armed she could confront the world. Wherever she went she preached the resurrection. To it as a fact she constantly bore witness, and on it as a doctrine she constantly dwelt. In it she discovered error's antidote, sorrow's consolation, virtue's encouragement, and the mightiest force to quicken religious life. By it she carried conviction to multitudes on the day of Pentecost; through it she aroused the attention of the Gentiles to the Gospel; and on it she rested her argument for personal immortality. Whatever advantages she won, whatever doubts she removed, whatever prejudices she destroyed, whatever fears she allayed, whatever hopes she revived and whatever dignity she achieved, she accomplished through the power of the oft-repeated truth that "Christ was risen from the dead."

The efforts made by the Jewish enemies of Christianity and their Roman allies, to break the force of apostolic testimony concerning the resurrection, have come to be regarded as exceedingly ill-contrived and inconclusive. They circulated a report that soldiers who guarded the tomb slept at their post, and that, while they did so, the disciples stole the body. Such an account of the matter is absurdly weak. It is not likely that Roman sentinels would slumber at their post, and less likely that it would have been proclaimed, unless strong reasons existed for overlooking so serious a breach of discipline. But if they

slept, they knew not anything, and could not have known by what means the remains had disappeared. And how incredible the accusation that a band of craven men, who had abandoned their Master on the first approach of danger, and who were as much interested as the rest of the world in having fairly decided the validity of His claims, should attempt a theft, which, if it failed, would cost them their lives, and if it succeeded, would yield them no satisfaction. There are circumstantial evidences which confirm this view. The grave-clothes were not only left behind, but they were carefully arranged, and it is not probable that vulgar plunderers, intent on deceiving, would have had sufficient nerve to unwrap the covering from the corpse, or would have taken pains to fold it so methodically, with the waking of the sentry every moment imminent; nor is it conceivable that they would have run the risk of detection by bearing their dead burden through the country. It cannot, therefore, but be manifest to all that the reiterated assertions of priests and rulers were without foundation, and are only valuable as clearly showing in what sense the disciples were understood when they proclaimed the resurrection of our Lord.

Dr. Hooykaas, in the *Bible for Learners*, teaches that “in the faith and preaching of the apostles the term ‘resurrection’ simply denoted the Savior’s ascension from the underworld, into which the Jews believed the purest and most holy, without exception, must descend, to the heavenly glory”; and that “this is the reason why they never said that ‘Jesus rose from death,’ far less ‘from the grave,’ but always ‘from the dead’—that is, from the place where the shades of the departed abide.” In other words, the apostles employed a Jewish mode of thought—a kind of theological idiom—to express what no one who believes in immortality will deny, “that, as a matter of course, Jesus, like all good and noble souls—and indeed

above all others—would go straight to a better world, to Heaven, to God.” But certainly this was not the impression made by their statements on their contemporaries. Had they been understood as reiterating the accepted doctrine regarding Hades and the future life, small cause would there have been for excitement in Jerusalem, and none at all for alleging that the body of Jesus had been stolen. The conduct of the authorities is inexplicable on the supposition that the disciples were not affirming something different from current beliefs, and something that derived considerable probability from the mysterious emptiness of the tomb. Their attitude is easily explained if it was being taught that the dead form had been resuscitated and reunited with the spirit. Hence we cannot, if we would, escape the conclusion that the disciples meant by the term under consideration an actual physical deliverance from death and the grave.

This interpretation is likewise sustained by various representations given in the New Testament; in the text, for instance, where our Savior is seeking to remove the doubts of His followers, He is reported as saying, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have”—language entirely at variance with the theory of Dr. Hooykaas. So also are the declarations that He was frequently seen during forty days, at one time by five hundred brethren; that He was touched; that He ate and conversed. Neither can it be harmonized with the testimony of Peter: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” Moreover, it is strikingly irreconcilable with the effects of Paul’s preaching at Athens. The epicureans and stoics treated him and his doctrine with contempt. They would hardly have ridiculed him for holding to the immortality of the soul, as many of their own countrymen had advocated on philosophical grounds the same

hope. If we will only think of him as maintaining that Jesus did not see corruption, but rose triumphant from the tomb, as evangelical Christendom teaches to-day, we will readily perceive that a faith so contrary to what was accepted among them would naturally excite the mocking protest of philosophers. These considerations ought to convince us that the disciples meant to convey the impression that Christ was actually restored to life, however insufficient the ground of their belief may have been.

But it is claimed by various modern rationalists that, while this may have been the idea of the disciples, as there could not have been any corresponding fact, it must have been the result of some unhappy hallucination. Schliermacher essays to prove that the Lord never died at all, but fell into a trance, and, reviving from apparent death, unintentionally gave currency to the supernatural notion which is now a chief article of the Christian religion. The destructive criticism of Strauss has swept away this hypothesis, and the more poetic conception of Renan has taken its place. He traces the delusion to Mary Magdalene, who, being once possessed with devils, was never free from an uncontrollable and vivid fancy, and who, in the excitement caused by the crucifixion, imagined that the Lord had risen from the tomb. This phantasy she imparts to others, and they invest it with the form of history. Well may Renan exclaim, in view of her work, "Oh! Divine power of love, sacred moments, in which the passion of one whose senses were deceived gives to the world a God risen from the dead!" Of course, this theory implies a susceptible state of mind on the part of the disciples. They were so confused by the tragical events which they had witnessed, that they were prepared to accept any chimaera which promised relief and consolation. Viscount Amberley tries to describe their mental condition in these words: "It is hard to realize, in fact, that a beloved com-

panion is in truth gone from us forever. Reason may tell us too distinctly that all hope of the return of the beloved one to life is vain and foolish. But emotion speaks to us in another language." "Deep within us there arises a craving for the presence of our friend, and with it the irrepressible thought that he may even yet come back to those who can scarcely bear to live without him. Were these inevitable longings not to be checked by a clear perception that they originate in our broken hearts, we should fancy that we saw the figure of the departed and heard his voice. In that case a resurrection would have taken place for us and for those who believe our tale." And thus the disciples, moved by strong affection, pictured to themselves the form of the dear departed One, and their narrative, as Dr. Hooykaas has it, was but a chapter of their own inner life, not of the outer life of the Master.

Keim supposes that the apostles had visions of the glorified Jesus produced by Himself, and that though the body remained in the tomb, these appearances were, as he expresses it, a kind of telegram, informing them that He yet lived. Rénan's explanation of the subject is interesting. "At the moment in which Mahomet expired, Omar rushed from the tent, sword in hand, and declared that he would hew down any one who should dare to say that the prophet was no more. . . . Heroes do not die. What is true existence but the recollection of us which survives in the hearts of those who love us? For some years this adored Master had filled the little world by which He was surrounded, with joy and hope; could they consent to allow Him to the decay of the tomb? No; He had lived so entirely in those who surrounded Him, that they could but affirm that after His death He was still living." In the historical comparison in this account it is apparently forgotten that not one of the apostles insisted, as Omar did, that the Master was not dead. That sad fact they all admitted, and indeed they were slow

to credit that He had been freed from the grave. They were not the sort of persons to be misled by such fancies and illusions as are favored by the French critic. That they did not intend to be understood as subscribing to such vagaries, may be inferred from what Matthew Arnold wrote regarding Paul's doctrine on the subject. The British Hellenist does not admit that Paul really knew his own mind, but that he sincerely thought he believed what he affirmed. Mr. Arnold writes: "Not for a moment do we deny that in Paul's earlier theology, and notably in the Epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, the physical and miraculous aspect of the resurrection, both Christ's and the believer's, is primary and predominant. Not for a moment do we deny that to the very end of his life, after the Epistle to the Romans, after the Epistle to the Philippians, if he had been asked whether he held the doctrine of the resurrection in the physical and miraculous sense as well as in his own spiritual and mystical sense, he would have replied with entire conviction that he did. Very likely it would have been impossible to him to imagine his theology without it. But —

" 'Below the surface stream, shallow and light,
Of what we *say* we feel — below the stream,
As light, of what we *think* we feel, there flows
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
The central stream of what we feel indeed.' "

That is, Paul thought that he thought one thing, but deep down in his heart and all unconsciously he thought another thing. But if Paul did not really know his own mind when describing the resurrection of Christ, how can Mr. Arnold eighteen hundred years after be so sure that *he* knows what passed in the apostle's mind? And what is of more direct interest, how can Mr. Arnold be sure of what is passing in his *own* mind when criticising Paul?

Perhaps the critic himself *has a deeper depth*, and all unconscious to himself believes just the opposite to what he has written. This is as possible of him as of the servant of God whose psychological moods he treats so familiarly. And if it is true of either of them there is an end to all intelligent communication on this or on any other subject. Common sense will prefer to avoid so lamentable an alternative, and will not consent to involve itself in such a labyrinth of uncertainty for the sake of impugning the natural meaning of what Paul sets forth so lucidly. He according to Mr. Arnold did teach, and did intend to teach, that the Jesus who was slain rose bodily from the tomb and was seen by his disciples. No one has ever yet succeeded in resolving the narrative of this event into figure or myth, and failures in this direction go to prove that the evidence on which the event rests is unimpeachable.

If any doubts exist regarding the objective reality of Christ's resurrection, these visionary theories should effectually remove them. They are so strained, far-fetched and evasive that we would have to return to the Magdalene's first estate to accept them. Indeed, it requires less credulity to receive the unvarnished story contained in the New Testament, although it involves a miracle, than it does to believe these fantastic explanations, which, in their hot zeal to deny the miraculous, affirm the impossible and the ridiculous. That this criticism is not undeserved it may be well to prove, especially as it is generally admitted, if the hallucination hypothesis is untenable, the view held by the Church must be practically unassailable.

In support of our criticism psychology may be cited. The science of mind teaches that illusions are not fortuitous, but are determined by some ruling idea or absorbing desire. Back of the crazy beggar who imagines himself a millionaire, or of the fanatic who imagines that he is a sacred personage, are thoughts and longings indulged

through many years, which, growing morbidly intense, have ended in a mania. The so-called visions of the Maid of Orleans undoubtedly were born of a diseased mind, engendered by the condition of her unhappy country, and by her passionate yearning for a deliverer. But nothing of this kind accounts for the alleged illusion of the disciples. They did not expect the resurrection of Jesus. Even when He foretold it, they attached no importance to it, and do not seem even to have understood His meaning. They express surprise when it is announced, are slow of heart to believe the report, and even the women, taking spices to preserve the body, indicate that they were not anticipating any such event. Thomas, also described by Wordsworth as

“A smooth-rubbed soul to which could cling
No form of feeling great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficient thing,
An intellectual all-in-all,”

at first stoutly refused to credit the testimony of his brethren, and only acknowledged himself convinced when doubt was no longer possible. This is not the conduct of men predisposed to illusion and sentimentality. They carried themselves as calmly, judicially and incredulously as we would were there a report in circulation that President Garfield was risen from the dead.

It is also worthy of note that five hundred of the disciples claim to have seen Jesus after His resurrection, together and under the same circumstances. Individuals separated widely by space or time have undoubtedly succeeded in convincing others that they have been favored with visions of Christ or of the Virgin, and they to whom they communicated the fable may have wrought themselves into the belief that they also had experienced something similar; but it would be difficult to produce an instance where half a thousand of people imagined the

same supernatural phenomenon, which in its nature appealed directly to the senses, at the same moment and in company with each other. Such wholesale self-deception surpasses the limits of credulity; and when it is alleged we cannot but suspect that there is greater anxiety to defend a foregone conclusion than to ascertain the truth. And surely we can more easily believe the five hundred brethren than yield assent to a theory which involves a marvel surpassing in proportions that to which they witnessed. It is likewise surprising, if they were self-deceived, that they never found it out in subsequent years. They lived and died in the faith of the resurrection. Were we to imagine, in the excitement of our grief, that a loved friend had returned from the dead, the sober second thought would certainly dissipate the illusion, and none of us would think of asserting it in the teeth of persecution. Judge Christ's followers by yourselves. They never recanted, never wavered, and even fiery trials could not shake their convictions, and it is only reasonable to conclude that they were founded on reality. But if their steadfastness warrants this inference, their ability to convince others of the truth of that which they proclaimed heightens it to certainty. If they were deluded, how came they to delude thousands who were prejudiced against them and their statements? They could only have satisfied the skeptical, unsympathetic multitudes by unimpeachable evidence, and that they were thus satisfied proves that just such evidence was on hand, and if it was, then the disciples were not the unhappy victims of a chimera. Voltaire, in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, lays down the following criteria by which the conclusiveness of testimony may be judged. He says that it is sufficient when it rests on

“1. A great number of very sensible witnesses who agree in having seen well:

2. Who are sane bodily and mentally ;
3. Who are impartial and disinterested ;
4. Who unanimously agree ;
5. Who solemnly certify to the fact."

Upon just such testimony the objective reality of the resurrection rests. The disciples were numerous enough, and sensible enough, and sound enough in mind and heart to shield them from imposition, and they had too much at stake, both for time and eternity, to mislead themselves or others. If we, therefore, allow ourselves to be guided by the rationalist, Voltaire, we shall accept the historical view, and repudiate, as unworthy of confidence, the hallucination theory which modern anti-supernaturalism, in its mad struggle for supremacy, would palm off on society, in defiance of the very laws of evidence which one of its most brilliant leaders has elaborated with so much care.

I have thus been particular in explaining what the apostles meant when they spoke of the Savior's resurrection, and in defending them from the charge of self-delusion — a charge which, in failing to substantiate itself, leaves the sublime event unchallenged — because of its place in the Christian system, and its relation to spiritual life and immortal hope.

Its relation to human life — to its ideals and aims — is indeed of the highest moment. "What advantageth it me?" is the passionate and solemn inquiry of Paul; what profit to expose my person, to endure shame, to contend with wild beasts and beastly men if the dead rise not? By these sacrifices I am not saving men; for there is no salvation; and by this self-abnegation I am benefiting no one, for I am setting before all an erroneous ideal of happiness. If Christ rose not, then there is no immortality, and if there is no immortality, religion is a farce, and efforts to extend it, and particularly painful endeavors, are fruitless of real good. The true aim of life has been lost sight of: "Let

us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." From this it would seem that in Paul's opinion only one of two positions is tenable; either the doctrine of Christ or that of Epicurus. Strange as it may seem to you these are the real rivals, and we in the nature of things become attached to one or the other.

The system of the Greek philosopher was not at the beginning the sensual thing it became later on. Originally it taught "that the pleasure which produces no pain is to be sought; and that the pain which produces no pleasure is to be avoided. The pleasure is to be avoided which prevents a greater pleasure or produces a greater pain. The pain is to be endured which averts a greater pain, or secures a greater pleasure." Epicurus himself was a man of comparatively blameless character, and his principles are not to be confounded with those of the sensual Cyrenaic school. Horace was one of his followers, and Lucretius extolled him as one of the gods, declaring that while "Ceres gave men corn, and Bacchus wine, Epicurus gave to men the essentials of virtue."

The view taken by this philosopher of death is thus expressed: "Accustom yourself to the thought that death is indifferent; for all good and evil consist in feeling, and what is death but the privation of feeling?" Harmless as these sentiments may appear on the first reading, experience of their working proved that they tended in the long run toward dissoluteness of conduct. Pleasure even in the high and refined sense intended by their author is not the end of existence and cannot be pursued without resulting, as in the Roman Empire, in debasing lasciviousness. Such a supreme purpose renders ridiculous the history of heroism, and is irreconcilable with the idea of self-sacrifice. It obscures and even obliterates the conception of duty or restricts it to the sole design of ministering to self-indulgence. And in proportion as such an ideal dominates society, selfishness, parade and egoism must prevail, and even charity become a

form of personal gratification, as when fashionable ladies propose that their children shall present gifts to the poor in a theatre before an admiring audience.

Worship itself may be perverted by this subtle philosophy, and be so ordered as merely to satisfy the senses, quiet conscience, lull the apprehensions and drown suspicion of any ultimate responsibility for conduct. And yet what more reasonable than that this should be so if Christ has not risen from the dead?

For if He has not risen, we have no demonstration on the broadest stage that the real life, the true life, is the life of self-surrender and self-immolation. We may imagine that it is, and if we are sentimentally inclined we may experiment in that direction, but we have no assurance that we are right in our conclusion. The majority of our heroes and benefactors have been persecuted, derided, slain; and though sepulchres and monuments have in some instances been built to their memory, when the real nature of their service has almost been forgotten, not much encouragement is afforded by these posthumous honors for practical souls to imitate their example.

The painful doubt yet remains as to whether it is wisely profitable to spend and be spent for others, and whether common sense justifies sacrifices that are rarely appreciated and that are not demanded by a Divine law which the Highest Himself has honored and proven to be the unfailing condition of the purest and most permanent good. The resurrection of Jesus has shown that such a life is not in vain. Had He remained in the tomb, not even His masterly beneficence would have given to Him the power He has exerted for these twenty centuries. There would have been something lacking. The commanding majesty of His presence would have been less, and the authority of His word and example would not have been as absolute in influencing human thought and conduct. If this is doubted, let the

experiment be made of preaching a beautiful Christ, who has perished like others ; and unless the hearers have already been drilled to reverence by what has been repeated about His resurrection, it will be found, that while they may admire, they will not be overawed by the imperative authority of His career.

The world craves the knowledge, not the guess, not the maybe, of what should be the real purpose of man's being. How can he worthily exercise his faculties? What is his place among material magnitudes? Why is he on earth? And in what way can he fulfill himself? The open and abandoned sepulchre furnishes the answer. Jesus toiled, taught and submitted to temptation and tribulation for the race. It was said of Him "He saved others, Himself He could not save," which was true enough with the exception of a single word. Substitute "would" for "could," so that the clause shall read "Himself He would not save," and you have disclosed the spirit of His ministry. Well, this self-denying Benefactor is thrust into a grave, and the life appears to have merely been a sweet poem in deeds but forever deprived of power. On the third day He rose from the dead. That simple but sublime fact changes everything. The Almighty has affirmed by this tremendous event that He is on the side of self-sacrifice, that He will always in the fullness of time justify it, that it can never be fruitless, and that though its marvelous potency may be hidden in a tomb, not merely for three days but for three centuries, it shall at last assert itself and prosper gloriously. Hence, in view of our Savior's triumph, Paul was satisfied that it did advantage him to fight with beasts at Ephesus ; and hence, likewise, as he closes his argument, he waves forever Epicurean ideals out of court, exclaiming : "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is *not in vain* in the Lord."

But beyond this there are three special benefits flowing

from the Galilean's triumph over death that deserve to be distinctly noted and to be perpetually prized.

First. Christ's resurrection is a proof of His own personal greatness. Paul teaches that by it He was declared to be "the Son of God with power"; and Peter, in one of his sermons, affirms that "God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." During His earthly ministry Jesus was constantly intimating wonderful things concerning Himself, assuming the loftiest prerogatives and exciting the highest expectations. He claimed to be "one with the Father"; to be both "the Light and the Life" of men; he declared that no human soul could approach the Father save through Him; but that through Him all the fallen children of Adam could attain unto everlasting life. He assumes to know men, — their thoughts, weaknesses, needs, — and to be abundantly able to fan "the smoking flax" of desire into a flame, and to draw the world — halting, reluctant world — unto Himself. Throughout His ministry He is continually saying,

"Dost not thou will, poor soul? Yet I receive
The inner unseen longings of the soul;
I guide them turning towards Me; I control
And charm hearts till they grieve:
If thou desire, it yet shall come to pass,
Though thou but wish indeed to choose My love;
For I have power in earth and heaven above. —
I cannot wish, alas!

"What, neither choose nor wish to choose? and yet
I still must strive to win thee and constrain:
For thee I hung upon the cross in pain,
How then can I forget?
If thou as yet dost neither love, nor hate,
Nor choose, nor wish, — resign thyself, be still
Till I infuse love, hatred, longing, will. —
I do not deprecate."

In addition to these assumptions he claimed that He

had come to found a heavenly kingdom, and that He was older than Abraham, and in Himself superior to the Law and the Prophets. But the climax of all these sublime representations, or, rather, their humiliating anti-climax, was the Cross and the Sepulcher. In contempt of Him and His lofty assumptions, they nailed Him to the tree, and wrote over Him the derisive words: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Thus abruptly is His career brought to an end. The lips that spoke such commanding words are rudely silenced, the hands that should have executed His mighty promises are mockingly bound, and the life that antedated the career of Abraham is violently terminated, and a tomb swallows up and covers with shame and ignominy the huge pretensions which at one time threatened to compel the allegiance of all Palestine. As we mark this inconclusive and inconsequential ending of a career so wonderfully benign and so wonderfully imposing we cannot but feel that something is wrong. Either the close is wrong—shockingly, outrageously wrong—or it is itself wrong in inception and conduct from first to last. Which?

The answer breaks upon us in the triumphant strains of His resurrection. Few of all the millions who have penetrated the domain of death have returned to earth, and none of their own volition or through their own power; but of Jesus it is written that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it again, and, in thus triumphing over the universal victor, He reversed the decision of His judges, confounded His wretched adversaries, vindicated His essential glory, smote the realms of wickedness with consternation, and filled the courts of Heaven with joy. An apostle, contemplating this, declares: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more," and the Epistles mark His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His exercise of sovereignty Divine. When the sun begins to climb the eastern slopes, our thoughts

are centered in its disk and radiance; but when it has reached the zenith, we think not of it as an orb, but as light—as light bathing the globe and diffused through space. So we, like the sacred writers, are carried by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness to the zenith of His glory, and then we behold Him, no longer limited by space and time, but Omnipresent and Eternal—the Being who, as the light, “has nurtured with impartial love the many-changing ages.”

Secondly. Christ’s resurrection is a pledge of personal immortality. Richter, desiring to invest atheism with its own horrid darkness, represents Jesus as returning to a group of shadows gathered in a church, and as saying: “I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, with the milky ways I have passed athwart the great waste places of the sky; there is no God. And I descended to where the very shadow cast by Being dies out and ends, and I gazed out into the gulf beyond, and cried, ‘Father, where art Thou?’ But answer came there none, save the eternal storm which rages on, controlled by none; and toward the west, above the chasm, a gleaming rainbow hung, but there was no sun to give it birth, and so it sank and fell by drops into the gulf. * * * Shriek on, then, discords; shatter the shadows with your shrieking din, for He is not!” If this were true, well might we say of man, “That petty life of thine is but the sigh of Nature, or the echo of that sigh. Your wavering cloudy forms are but reflections of rays cast by a concave mirror upon the clouds of dust which shroud your world—dust which is dead men’s ashes. A mist of worlds rises up from the ocean of death; the future is a gathering cloud, the present a falling vapor.” This is a poet’s dreary dream. Christ’s resurrection is reality! He did depart, He did return, and, returning, His very presence did proclaim that there is a Father’s heart in the universe, and that it beats in sympathy with the suffering

and oppressed. As He emerged from the charnel-house He said, in substance: "Though the Father permitted the cross and the scourge, He was not unmindful of His Son; and though He may permit you to be tried and afflicted sore, He has not abandoned you, and in evidence of which witness my resurrection." Yes, the resurrection is proof of a Providence which overrules the sins of men, which cares for the oppressed, and which will vindicate the right, if not in this life, then in the life to come. Of the certainty of that immortal life the resurrection is the assuring pledge. Such a pledge we sadly need. The utterances of Mr. Mill, of George Eliot, of Mr. Conway and of Mr. Emerson plainly show how insufficient is reason to solve satisfactorily the problem of existence. Left to the vague reasonings of our philosophers, our faith in immortality could never have been more than an aspiration; but resting in Him who has said: "Because I live ye shall live also," we look with confidence beyond this vale of death to those unseen hills on which the light of life falls forevermore.

Thirdly. The resurrection of Jesus is a prophecy, and an interpretation of prophecy. It foreshadows our own deliverance from the grave. As He rose, so shall we. True, our mortal part shall see corruption, shall blend with the dust, or mingle with the waters of the great sea; but He who hath "all power in Heaven and in earth," shall clothe "this mortal with immortality." As the Master rose to fuller and grander life, so shall we; for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." As He rose suddenly, heralded by Angels and by trembling Nature, so shall we, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." And as he led "captivity captive," so shall we at last triumphantly exclaim, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" But this glorious consummation is reserved to the time of His second advent, "for the Lord Himself shall descend from

Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Do you ask, What is meant by this second coming? Let the Lord's resurrection answer. If he rose actually, literally, bodily, in that sense He went into Heaven, and only in that sense can He return. "This same Jesus, which is taken from you into Heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." This is the testimony of inspiration; this is the logic of Christ's resurrection. As by faith I behold Him departing to his glorious home, so by faith I behold Him, visibly returning to His earthly kingdom, and my prayer ascends, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

" And when a shadow falls across the window
Of my room,
When I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door and ask
If He is come;
And the angel answers sweetly
In my home:
' Only a few more shadows
And He will come.' "

Brethren, it may be given to some of us to witness this great sight. But whether we shall be of them "who shall not all sleep," or of those "who sleep in the dust of the earth," we may confidently believe, in the light of His resurrection, that by His Spirit "He will come again and receive us unto Himself; that where he is, there we may be also." Therefore, whether we sleep or wake, whether He comes to us and for us personally or spiritually, we may rest assured that He will hear us when we pray,

" Interpose
No deathly angel 'twixt my face and thine;
But stoop thyself to gather my life's rose,
And smile away my mortal to Divine."

XXIV.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS.

“And a cloud received Him out of their sight.”—*Acts i, 9.*

FOR forty days after His resurrection the great Galilean came and went on the earth, and then He mysteriously disappeared. The open grave gave evidence that “He who had been dead was alive again,” and His sudden transition strengthened the conviction that “He is alive forevermore.” Various expressive circumstances seemed to intimate the coming of a crisis or a consummation in His ministry. There was something in His interviews with His disciples that imparted to them the hush of expectant solemnity which usually heralds a radical change. His movements were more reserved than before His death, and His words were more condensed and commanding than in the former days of intimate intercourse. Errors are corrected, misapprehensions removed, curiosity restrained, facts explained, instruction imparted, and all in such a way as to indicate an approaching event of supreme importance. This His companions must in some degree have realized, especially as He led them out of Jerusalem toward the Mount of Olives. Probably the little procession excited no attention as it passed the busy or the idle on the streets. The Master Himself most likely was invisible to all except His immediate followers, and their appearance or actions were not of sufficient significance to awaken public interest. Onward, therefore, the meagre band pursued its way unnoticed, though

it was the advance guard of an army that should achieve the most notable triumph of the ages and dethrone both the religion and civilization of paganism. They crossed the Kedron and entered Gethsemane, where they may have paused to recall the awful agony beneath the olives on the night of the betrayal, and to meditate on the transcendent miracle which had delivered their gracious Lord from the power of death. But they do not tarry long; for the sacred Presence leads them onward, on toward the humble town of Bethany, scene of precious memories—memories of friendship, and of sorrow, and of joy. Here the Savior halts. The hour has arrived. A subdued, reverent, and unutterably intense excitement takes possession of His humble friends. Instinctively they must have apprehended the imminence of separation, and have been overwhelmed by its possible consequences to themselves and to the feeble Church so recently established among men. The Lord tenderly compassionates them, and He whose life had been a constant benediction raises His hands to bless. His divine lips murmur farewell words, and all ears greedily drink in their melody: “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” The gospel for all the nations through “all the days” is His last bequest intrusted to the diligence and loyalty of His followers. They receive the solemn charge in silence; and as they contemplate Him wrapt and spell-bound, their souls worshiping, they witness a marvelous translation. “Earth loses its attraction, and the waiting and up-drawing heavens claim Jesus as their own.”

“A cloud received Him out of their sight.”

In describing the manner of this separation, the language

of appearance is employed. As there is in reality neither up nor down in the visible universe, even as there is no actual rising or setting of the sun, so in fact, strictly speaking, our Lord could not have ascended. To the eye it was as though He rose; and the sacred writer was fully warranted in recording the movement as he does, saying, "While they beheld, He was taken up," and the literal occurrence is sufficiently expressed in the statements: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." "And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried into heaven." (*Mark xvi, 19; Luke xxiv, 51.*) In this language we have simply an account of our Lord's withdrawal from the earth, of His removal from human sight into the Unseen, where He now dwells, with the implication conveyed that His earthly limitations have been laid aside and the Divine glory completely and permanently resumed. It is, in other words, a representation that suggests the twofold possibility of His remaining in spirit with His Church on earth, while He lives and in incarnate splendor intercedes for His Church in heaven, thus filling all in all, even as He is Himself "the All and in all."

While the disciples could not have apprehended the full significance of the scene they witnessed, they could not have failed to realize, as the cloud enfolded the revered form, that the earthly and sensible communion between Him and themselves had ceased. No wonder, then, that they stood motionless, and followed Him with their eyes, as though they would see Him leave His cloudy chariot and hear the triumphant shouts of angelic hosts, as they cry to the city that hath foundations, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let the King of glory enter in," and would catch the echo of the challenge and reply: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Gently, however, is the sweet, ecstatic reverie disturbed by

attending angels. "Two men in white apparel" tenderly recalled the watchers to themselves, saying: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Why gaze? Why stand dazed, wrapped in meditation, when a world lying in sin awaits your ministry? Why *stand* gazing, when the command is on you to *go*, and to *go ever*, "through all the days," preaching? Why gaze irresolute, when the absence of your Lord is only a necessary condition to His being ever present with the "all power of heaven" to make your preaching His "all power" in earth? Enough for you to know that this same Jesus shall return, and that, until then, your duty and your honor lie in carrying out the great commission.

"A cloud received Him out of their sight"; and to many a weary and perplexed soul the cloud yet remains. To such souls the Ascension is inexplicable or meaningless. Though the Savior said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," they fail to discern any gain whatever to the Church from His absence. They ask, How can it be best and needful that His bodily presence should be removed from us? Would we not be purer, stronger, braver, were He here to cheer us by His example and companionship? Would not sinners be more easily converted, could they see Him and hear His voice? Does it not look as though He had forsaken us, and as though "Ichabod" ought to be written on the altars of His kingdom? In other cases, however, the separating cloud is not exactly of this character. Not, as in the former instance, does it rise from the sea of misapprehension and misgiving, but rather from the shallow tides of indifference and thoughtlessness. The Ascension is often regarded with doubt and suspicion as unnecessarily taxing credulity, because its vital relation to the world's spiritual development and happiness is unappreciated. Nor is this

the fault of the sacred writers. They certainly bear explicit testimony to the supreme importance of this event. When dwelling on the security of the saints (*Romans viii*), Paul reminds them that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, making intercession for them; and in urging the Colossians to the highest life, he bases his appeal in their supernatural privileges: "If ye then were raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God" (*iii, 1*). Peter, on the very commencement of aggressive Christianity, declared "that the heavens had received Christ until the times of restitution" (*Acts iii, 21*), as though the latter consummation depended in some way on the withdrawal to the invisible glory. For which statement Jesus Himself prepares us when He says: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (*John xvi, 7*). And in view of this language we are not surprised at Paul's magnificent and exhaustive conception of the Ascension and its significance: —

"Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (*Eph. iv, 8-15*).

And if we shall only take to heart the far-reaching import of these Scriptures, we shall never contemplate the Ascension with mere unintelligent wonder, nor regard it as tending to bewilder with its mysteries, while it fails to profit by its spiritual and practical bearings.

THE ASCENSION WAS NECESSARY TO THE COMPLETE REVELATION AND REALIZATION OF THE SAVIOR'S GLORY. It was certainly the natural climax to a career that began with miracle; and for Him who was born of a virgin to have passed into the unseen universe in any ordinary manner would have been to discredit the marvel of His birth. The incarnation seems to demand the translation: the manger, with its wondering shepherds, calls for the cloud with its rejoicing angels; and the nativity without a father finds its legitimate outcome in immortal life without a grave. Such an existence must ascend, or it declines, and possibly in human esteem descends beneath the reality. There can be no conceivable occasion in Him for the reproach brought by Schiller against one who commenced his course with pretentious boastings and ended in ignominy, —

“Thy life that arrogated such an height
 To end in such a nothing! To be nothing
 When one was always nothing, is an evil
 That asks no stretch of patience — a light end:
 But to become a NOTHING, having BEEN ——”

That is indeed humiliating. But when Jesus appeared as a babe He was already on the heights, and His subsequent days and years were upward in their trend until He reached the cross; and that which in the case of any other would have brought down is described as “a lifting up from the earth,” and leads to a rising from the dead, which in its turn leads to the only permissible culmination — the enthronement on God's right hand. Bethlehem is followed by the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Olives by the Holy Hill of Zion; and beyond that heavenly eminence even our imaginations cannot rise. Nothing, therefore, in view of our Lord's mysterious character and ministry, is more reasonable than the Ascension, an event that confirms His most exalted claims, and that opens to us fresh disclosures of His essential glory.

When His enemies pretended to be outraged by His assumptions, He quietly asked them: "What if ye shall see the SON ascend from whence he came?" In these words He affirms his preëxistence, and foreshadows His more than restoration to former honor. He argues that His ability to convince the world of righteousness is grounded in the fact that "He goes to His Father"; and, following His crucifixion, He inquires, "Ought not Christ to have suffered, and afterwards to be received into glory?" Peter takes up the theme and in reality answers the Master's question when he declares that Jesus "is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to Him" (*1 Peter iii*, 22). And the Apostle Paul in the same spirit assures the Philippians that "God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (*Phil. ii*, 6-11). These disclosures of our Lord's dignity certainly increased the knowledge of His Church as to the rank and glory of her Head. Whatever she may have believed prior to His withdrawal from earth, she must have been convinced afterwards of His supreme power and authority in the universe. To attain unto this glorified state He had to depart; for the conditions necessary to its realization did not exist here, and could not have been imparted without changing entirely the character of this dispensation. The earth is not the throne-room of the Divine empire; nor could the seat of sovereign sway be moved here without ending at a stroke the entire movement of moral discipline that is transpiring here; nor could angels with all their visible splendor, and the order, system, and perfection of being that pertain to the heavenly world, be transferred to a province in revolt without frustrating the grace that seeks to save the wicked by compassion, not overwhelm them by magnificence. After the era of probation ends, this mundane sphere will be prepared to receive its Lord. But then the

discord will be ended, and the government of glory will be in complete harmony with the renewed and purified globe. As this time had not been reached, and was far away when the Galilean rose from the dead, He could only take possession of His own, and be acknowledged by all intelligences for what He is, by going away from us. He had to depart if He would reassert and reassume His glory; and this reinvestiture had to take place before it finally could be revealed to man.

But in addition to this I have no doubt that the withdrawal of the personal Christ has contributed largely to the world's realization of His transcendent greatness. "Generally, observation must cease before reflection begins," is an opinion expressed by the late Canon Liddon and illustrated by him in an interesting and felicitous manner. "Jacob must awake from his sleep before he can reflect, 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I know it not.' He must wrestle all night with the Angel, and even ask his name, ere he calls the name of the place Peniel, or can understand that he has seen God face to face, and that his life is preserved." "If Jesus is to be seen by His creatures in His relative and awful greatness, He must be withdrawn" (see *University Sermons*, pp. 292, 293). It is apparent to every reader of the Gospels that the disciples found it next to impossible to take the real measure of their Lord's grandeur while He was with them in the flesh. Their estimates are halting and uncertain. Near the close of His life He pathetically complains, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Their senses seem to have been so occupied that their mind was inactive or confused. But when the Presence was gone from before their eyes, then thought was stirred, and with what results Paul's language indicates: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." That is, no more after the flesh, but rather in all the fullness of His

high divinity. Even as the significance of heroes and leaders, their excellences and achievements, need the perspective of the grave, so the essential glory of our Lord needed for its apprehension by mortals the distance of heaven's throne from earth's abasement. His human form, His complete identification with the race, His submission to the environments that condition the movements of mankind, His hunger, weariness, and death, in short, His human limitations, must necessarily have added obscurity to His extraordinary claims.

Travelers have sometimes found a visit to the Holy Land damaging to their faith in His Deityship. The intense vividness imparted to His manhood by familiarity with the localities He sanctified has served in some degree to diminish their sense of His Godhood. And if this is the effect, even in some instances, of contact with scenes connected with His career and ministry, how much more difficult must it have been for the disciples, who had associated with Him in all of His poor earthly surroundings, to have believed, without wavering, that this wonderful being, circumstanced as a creature, was Himself the Creator! The lifting up of the Master to His throne in the universe, with all that this exaltation implies, was the clearing of all doubt and perplexity. Faith no longer stumbled. And now, beholding Him on the right hand of the Father, it is comparatively easy for the devout mind to think of Him after the manner of Browning, changing only the tense of his picturesque portrayal from the future to the present.

“So there crowns Him the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown;
And His love fills infinitude wholly, nor leaves up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in!”

THE ASCENSION WAS LIKEWISE NECESSARY TO THE CONTINUOUS PROGRESS AND POWER OF THE SAVIOR'S WORK. When on the cross he exclaimed, “It is finished,” the long struggle out of which grew our redemption was indeed

ended, but its efficacy was not yet acknowledged. To employ the figurative language of grace, "the price was paid," but it had not been accepted. The full recognition of all that He had done was not made until "He led captivity captive." When the Father said, "Sit Thou at My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool, and let all the angels of God worship Him," then was it made manifest throughout the universe that His interposition on behalf of sinful man was owned above and had prevailed. The Ascension was therefore a stage, and an indispensable stage, in the development of the merciful measures adopted for man's salvation. It is never to be forgotten that Jesus was the representative of the race when He was on earth, and in all things acted for it, and that this relationship He still sustains. He died for us; and He now lives for us. Hence Paul, referring to the hope that reaches within the veil, says, "whither Christ our forerunner has for us entered" (*Heb. vii, 20*). In Hebrews (*ix, 24*) it is also written that "He has entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us"; and the same writer lays stress on His "making intercession for us" (*Rom. viii, 34*). As our Representative, He claims for us all the fruitage of His travail of soul and sacrifice. He goes in advance into the heavenly glory and by His own merits makes good our right to the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to all other gifts necessary for life and godliness, and to the possession of the promised inheritance. Through His Ascension we receive the assurance that His advocacy of our cause has not been in vain. As the nobleman who had gone to obtain a kingdom, He has received one, and is there preparing a place for us, and by and by He will come again and induct us into our own. Thus it becomes evident that part of the redemption work had to be wrought out in another world than this. We may not fully understand why it is so; but that it is there can be no reasonable doubt. The withdrawal, therefore, of our Lord is

but an additional and a magnificent step in that preordained order of events by which the deliverance of man from sin and death is to be achieved.

It is worthy of observation that this progress of our Lord's work is distinguished by certain features that add greatly to its power. Remember that He took with Him into the heavenly glory the body He had worn in the days of His humiliation. Changed in some respects it undoubtedly was, but in essentials it was the same. In doing this He honored and dignified the human nature He had borne, and forever lifted it out of its degradation. The meanest wretch that crawls, the basest hind that serves, can look up to the eternal throne and see there his own nature crowned and exalted. It is the beginning of self-respect in the vicious and shameless, and it is the awakening of hope; for if what the Ascension reveals is actual, what may not be possible? If the humanity of our Lord is thus magnified, why may not the order of intelligences it represents rise to a share in its immortal privileges? To this possibility Christianity owes much of its influence in the world. It has abolished rank, caste, and class, and has proclaimed the law of solidarity and the duty of brotherhood. "What God has cleansed that call thou not common" is the decree of our faith, set forth at the beginning and perpetually working its way out in fellowships, equalities, and fair fraternities. And in proportion as it has been put into practice, and in proportion as the unity and sanctity of life have been realized, obstacles in the way of the Cross have been overcome and its mission has been successful. What also adds to this saving power is the fact that Jesus has not forgotten us in His changed and exalted state. That He took our nature with Him has exerted an elevating power over us, but that He has not forgotten those whom He has left behind in their condition of sin and sorrow has greatly increased His hold on the affections of all hearts. He

remembers us. Though He is crowned and we may be disgraced, though He is rich and we are poor, though He has all and we are yet struggling to attain, He is not puffed up or oblivious of our existence. He is the most brotherly of beings. Not a day passes but He thinks of us, and there is not a cry on our lips but He heeds. He watches over us, pleads for us, and is not ashamed to call us brethren. Let the princes of the earth be proud, and the money potentates be haughty, and let them suddenly forget their indigent friends. Thus hath littleness done from the beginning. But greatness is never unmindful of the lowly days and lowly associates, and ever sanctifies the former by reverent and grateful memories, and the latter by loving recollections and generous recognitions. Christ thinks of us in heaven as much as He did on earth, and the consciousness that He is mindful of us in His triumphant glory has perhaps greater power over the heart than His tender solicitude had while He was yet in His "body of humiliation."

Thus far I have referred exclusively to the unfolding of the Savior's redeeming work, and not at all to its dissemination or extension. And yet this is a form of progress that ought not to be overlooked, and one that depended for its efficiency in no small degree on the absence of the visible Christ. As we have seen, the gospel was to be preached to all the nations, "through all the days," and beginning at Jerusalem it was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth. This great commission has in some degree been complied with, and in this age it is being fulfilled as never before. Evangelical effort has been continually enlarging its circle, and its rippling floods are breaking on distant lands and on the remotest tribes and races of mankind. But we can hardly conceive such ever widening endeavor and influence to have been possible had Jesus remained in this world, necessarily localized and, in a sense, materialized. Then, all who might hear the message of salvation

would have been dissatisfied until it had been confirmed by His lips and its promises ratified by His personal assurances. If received at all, the multitudes would have to throng the highways, crowding on each other, and evangelization would be impeded, not advanced. As it is, everywhere, every place, whether in Christian or pagan lands, the Lord can be found. He is spiritually present and can hear the cry of the soul as well in Africa as in Palestine, in London as in Jerusalem, and by the flowing tides of the Rhine as well as by the waters of Jordan, and by the inland seas of America as well as by the Lake of Galilee. In existing circumstances this is readily apprehended and appreciated, but it would be hard to convince the nations, were Jesus reigning in the flesh at Jerusalem or at Rome, that He would give heed to prayers breathed from the antipodes.

Moreover, were He thus enthroned in splendor, salvation would cease to be of faith and would necessarily be of sight. He would at all times be visible to those who desired to see Him. The opportunity would be lost for the exercise of trust. Nay, being within reach and resplendent in dignity, the privilege of cross-bearing would cease. There would be no place for sacrifice, and no occasion for going "without the camp bearing His reproach." There would be no reproach to bear. The object of the dispensation of grace is to develop all that is noblest, purest, most heroic and disinterested in the human soul. This end is served, or at least facilitated, by the absence of Christ. For as it is, if His name is professed, it is in the face of difficulties, and with the certainty of burdens to be carried and of hostilities to be encountered. There was room for moral heroism and devotion when He was in Palestine, "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but there could be none, or none conceivable by me, were He there again, only enthroned in glory and environed by angels, the supernatural being subject to His will. In these altered circumstances no one would be called on to

die for Him or to suffer for Him, and the very type of character redemption was inaugurated to realize would gradually perish, and humanity sink to the level of mediocre morality and respectable commonplace.

BUT, FURTHER, THE ASCENSION WAS NECESSARY TO THE CONSTANT SPIRITUALITY AND SERVICE OF THE SAVIOR'S CHURCH. As the Jewish economy was abrogated, a new institution appeared among men. The one gave place to the other; but the second was not a reformed continuation of the first. The dispensations are not identical; for they do not agree in membership, observances, or aims. They are distinct and separate. The Mosaical economy was national, ceremonial, and educational. Its citizenship was determined by the flesh, and its direct purpose was to build up a state, a religious government, it is granted, but one where salvation, as we understand the term, was incidental, not the principal object of its existence. On the other hand, the Church, as the organ, the executive and visible expression of His Kingdom, is composed of regenerated individuals, and seeks an ever increasing spiritual fellowship, that religious power may be continually generated, through which souls may be converted and the conquests of redemption be multiplied. It was not an easy task to reconcile the people of our Lord's times to this ideal. Indeed, it was hard for them to understand it, and harder still for them to appreciate its importance. The primitive Christians evinced a disposition to challenge its soundness, some of them disturbing the peace by reactionary movements toward Judaism; and since their day frequent have the lapses been from its demands. What has been done toward its realization has been accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Ghost; and Jesus as good as declares that His own continuance on the earth in the flesh would hinder the success of this mission, and that it was therefore expedient that He go away, for if He went not away the Spirit would not come.

Why the action of the one Divine Agent was dependent on the withdrawal of the other Divine Agent may not be easy to explain. Yet, if we frame the statement differently, the difficulty may not prove insuperable. Why was it necessary that the Spirit dwelling in Christ without measure should be emancipated from the limitations of His humanity and be set free in the earth for the idea of the Church as a spiritual fellowship to be converted into a reality? The answer is evident; for in no other way could the conception so readily be carried out. Naturally the kind or character of the supreme ministry determines the character of the dispensation called into being by it. If the latter is to be broad, comprehensive, universal, subjective rather than objective, consisting more in life and in heart experiences than in rites and ceremonies, then it follows that its Author must be unconfined by locality or other environment, and must by the terms of His high nature be able to be everywhere, working in any one and every one at the same moment. The Alabaster box must be broken for the fragrance of the precious spikenard to fill the house, and the body of the Redeemer must be removed if the Spirit is to fill the earth with the power of His grace. Judging from analogy, though it must be admitted the materials at our disposal are not of the best, we find wherever the Church has professed the possession of a visible infallible head in the world she has deteriorated toward Jewish ceremonialism. When she has been most fully convinced that the Pope was unerring in counsel and unimpeachable in action, she has become more and more attached to forms and rites, more and more secular in her aims and methods, and less and less inclined to direct communion with God. I confess the analogy is not perfect, for none of the long line of Rome's chief shepherds can compare with the Lord Jesus Christ either in wisdom or conduct. But there is enough in the principle to show that prominence given to the local, the personal, and the carnal,

constituted as we are, is generally, if not inevitably, gained at the expense of the spiritual. Nor can we well see how it could be otherwise, even if the leader or representative were entirely irreproachable in character; and even if that representative were the Savior Himself who should reign in external majesty, we do not see how the evil could be averted. At least the constant temptation would be to conform each little congregation to the outward magnificence of the ruling King, and the effort to do this, and even the very thought concerning it, would have a tendency to deaden religious feelings and to produce a cold, stiff, and heartless worship.

Better far, then, is it that our Lord should absent Himself than by His corporeal presence impede or imperil the very ideal He is seeking to actualize in His Church. And better far is it, likewise, that He should remain away for a season, when, strange as it may seem, His exaltation in the heavens seems to exert an advantageous influence on Christian service.

The Ascension appears to render more manifest the need that exists for such service. A decided change came over the disciples with the removal of their Lord. Whereas they had been timid, hesitating, and irresolute, when they are left to themselves they become bold, decided, and aggressive. The sense of their responsibility evidently grows upon them as they meditate on their orphan condition. While Jesus was with them, they could safely leave Him to do everything; but, now that He has departed, if anything is accomplished they themselves must undertake the work. A similar transformation has often been observed in children. During the life of their father they may have given no signs of self-reliance nor of capacity adequate to their own support and guidance. They have simply trusted, and trusted implicitly, to the wisdom and energy of the devoted parent. But on his death, and the withdrawal of his presence, they have

come to feel unmistakably that henceforward they must depend on their own resources; and they have in many instances surprised their acquaintances by the sagacity and practical thoroughness they have displayed. There have also been instances of churches, who leaned so heavily on the pastor, and confided so completely in his ability to care for the Lord's cause, that they contented themselves with the arduous duty of criticising everything and doing nothing. And yet when they had crushed their willing leader, had killed him by their apathy or constrained him to leave them, they have suddenly startled the community by the many-sidedness and multiplicity of their activities. Verily, the minister's death was more necessary to them in the circumstances than his life. I am afraid, in our present situation and hampered with present infirmities, were our Lord on earth we too would "stand gazing," would be anxious for a sight of His excellent majesty, and would be so confident of His ability to make His enemies His footstool that the great commission would be neglected, and we deprive ourselves of the spiritual gains to our own character which accrue to consecrated and faithful labor in His name. As it is, He being gone, while we know we are dependent on His gracious assistance, the conclusion is forced on us that His kingdom cannot survive if we fail to toil incessantly on its behalf and for its advancement.

Then the Ascension, also, seems to remove an obstacle to the efficiency of Christian service. Have you ever thought how profoundly anxious you would be for your Lord's safety were He in person among you to-day, society being what it is, defiantly godless and intolerant of rebuke? It is almost incredible that after the suppression of the Dragon, the unveiling of judgment thrones, and the triumphant reign of the righteous, there should be an outbreak of wickedness and the marshaling of Gog and Magog in hostile array against the camp of the saints. And yet is not all this

written in the Book of Revelation? (*Chapter xx.*) This revolt against the supremacy of goodness is one of the strange contingencies enwombed in future years. Even when Right is most securely guarded, when it is most radiant and resplendent, and when its authority is nowhere publicly challenged or debated, Wrong raises the banner of rebellion and breaks out in immeasurable anarchy against its government. Would it be otherwise were Jesus in the flesh once more, making His home with the children of men? Not very likely. Unless He were to "cut short in righteousness" existing human conditions and characteristics, He would be assailed in our streets, would be requested to leave politics and the liquor traffic alone, and if He presumed to collide with the interests of selfishness and vice He would be hounded in our market-place or gibbeted in our jails. He would find as little favor in Chicago or in Boston as He found in Jerusalem; and how the thought of this would hamper the movements of His friends! They would involuntarily neglect their duty as the messengers of salvation to the race, in their desire to shield the person of their Beloved from the snares and schemes of His enemies. As it is, they are not paralyzed by these apprehensions and the necessity for these precautions. He is in heaven. Whatever may happen to the disciples, the Master is safe. No evil can befall Him, and this conviction nerves them to greater exertion. However the battle may go to-day, the Captain is beyond danger, and lives and must live, even after temporary disaster to His arms, to reorganize His forces and to direct their march to final and permanent victory.

I am persuaded that the Ascension supplies, likewise, an important stimulus to Christian service. In reality it is not lacking in motive power. John writes that the hope of seeing the Lord by and by constrains us to purify ourselves even as He is pure. (*1 John iii, 3.*) And Peter exclaims,

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” (*1 Peter i, 6.*) Surely from these words we are to infer that His absence is not without its compensation in stirring up a longing to behold Him and to so live now as to inherit His approval when we shall meet. The soldier in the field or the sailor on the vessel’s deck, away from friends and loved ones, though when at home he may have been careless of their wishes and commendations, is followed by their faces, and in his loneliness a new desire is born, a desire to be worthy of them. He expects to return, expects to be greeted by them, and he cannot bear the thought of going back in dishonor. The separation of Christ from His people acts in a similar way on their zeal and devotion. He is not here; shall we not then be more earnest and faithful than we would be were He walking in the flesh by our side? We must in a little while render to him an account of our stewardship; shall we not then keep our house in order for His inspection? The first meeting, the decisive meeting with Him cannot be long delayed. Are we willing to be asleep when He shall summons us into His presence? No; the more we meditate on the significance of His Ascension we shall perceive, not only its inevitableness and its gracious purport in many ways, but its relation to every manly and saintly instinct, and moved thereby we shall desire to toil nobly for the well-being of the world He has enriched with His blood.

“A cloud received Him out of their sight.” That cloud has disappeared from the heavens, and they who saw it gaze no longer on the shadow, but rejoice in the fullness of the light. They now behold His face, and know even as they are known. And soon whatever of darkness may envelop these mighty themes shall be dispersed, and we too shall enter on the glory of an eternal day. In a little while the cloud of death shall receive us and bear us to His sight; or

the clouds shall form His chariot once again and bear Him to His own on earth. Either way mystery thresholds eternity, and we can but wait and pray that, however dense the haze that intervenes, we may surely find Him just beyond. In this mood the Poet Laureate evidently was when he penned what proved to be his funeral hymn ; nor can I conceive of a truer expression to the soul's thought and longing as it contemplates the unseen. At least I — thinking of the Savior who has ascended, and of the hour when through the clouds of mystery I shall rise to meet Him, that I may forever be with Him — find the music in my heart to sing : —

“ Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

“ But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

“ Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

“ For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.”

XXV.

THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS.

We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.—*John i, 41.*

SUCH was the joyful announcement made by Andrew to his brother, Simon Peter. It implies prolonged expectation, ardent desire, tireless research, and satisfying and complete assurance. We will readily appreciate the delight of Andrew, if we will only remember that at the time of his discovery the Jewish nation was anxiously looking for a wonderful Deliverer—the Messiah, or God-anointed One, the Prophet greater than Moses and to whom Moses bore witness, and a King grander than David, and of whose sufferings and triumphs David sweetly sang. It was this anticipation which Zacharias regarded as on the eve of fulfillment when John, his son, was given to him in his old age, and which he celebrated in the exultant words, “The Lord hath visited and redeemed His people;” and it was this longing which inspired the song of Simeon, and the thanks of Anna when Mary presented the infant Jesus in the temple. A former generation had turned its eyes with hope toward Simon Maccabæus, as one still earlier had toward Zerubbabel; but the error was soon most keenly felt, and the attention of the people, influenced by prophecy and by political disasters, had gradually centered in the period which witnessed the origin of Christianity. The belief that Malcha Meschicha was then about to appear was so general that impostors, some of whom are mentioned by Josephus, were encouraged and actually deceived

many; and it was so well known that various Roman authors alluded to it. Suetonius wrote in the *Life of Vespasian* "An ancient and constant tradition has obtained throughout all the East that in the Fates it was decreed that about that time some who should come from Judea would obtain the dominion of the world;" and Tacitus, when referring to the prodigies which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, said that "many understood them as forerunners of that extraordinary person whom the ancient books of the priests did foretell should come about that time from Judea and obtain dominion." Thus the knowledge of Israel's hope was current among the pagans and aroused their curiosity, not unmingled with suspicion and apprehension.

But the Jews are not the only people who have cherished the faith that the Invisible and Infinite would be revealed in some glorious Being on earth who should bring moral and physical disorder to an end and restore what Virgil calls "Saturnian" days again. The Egyptians longed for a living manifestation of the hidden God, and taught that He would be the child of Isis; the Chinese looked for a Coming One who should be the Truth itself; and in the sixth century, B.C., Confucius said, "He would arise in the West;" the Goths craved an Odin who should sympathize with human sorrow and travel from city to city, comforting and healing; the Greeks, as is recorded in one of the Platonic dialogues, determined to "wait for One, be He a God or an inspired man, to instruct us in our religious duties, and, as Athene says to Diomed in Homer, to take away the darkness from our eyes;" and the Romans shared in these anticipations, as is proven by the famous eclogue of Virgil, in which he erroneously greets the new-born son of Pollio as the destined restorer of happiness:

The base, degenerate, iron offspring ends,
A golden progeny from Heaven descends. . . .
See, laboring Nature calls thee to sustain
The nodding frame of Heaven, and earth, and main!
See to their base restored, earth, seas, and air,
And joyful ages from behind in crowding ranks appear.

—Dryden's *Translation*.

Traces of a similar belief are to be found even among the Indians. Dawson, in his *Fossil Men*, represents them as having "traditions of a great benefactor, a teacher of arts, and introducer of humanity and civilization. Among the Peruvians he is Manco Capac; among the Mexicans, Quetzalcoati; among the Crees, Gepuchican; among the Micmacs, Glooscap; and the Iroquois form of the tradition forms the basis of Longfellow's 'Hiawatha.'" He is described as a "benevolent hero, or demi-god of the olden time, who has left the world or been spirited away, and is to return." It would seem, then, that these yearnings have been well-nigh universal, and, such being the case, it must follow that they are not only the outgrowth of the soul's deepest needs, but are of sufficient significance to warrant the inquiry as to their ever having been met and fulfilled in any great historic personage.

Christianity claims that they have, and asserts that Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, is the Being, and the only Being, who has realized in Himself the expectations of Israel and the visions of all other nationalities. He Himself assumed to be Messiah, the "Son of the Blessed." While He did not do so in a way to create public excitement and foment revolt against constituted civil authority, He never hesitated, at proper times and under fitting circumstances, to announce Himself as the predicted Anointed One. When the woman of Samaria said to Him, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ," He saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am He." The

confession of Peter, to the same purport, He accepted, and added, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." When He was solemnly questioned by Caiaphas as to whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, He answered, "Thou hast said." And thus He stakes His standing in the judgment of posterity on the righteousness and truthfulness of this declaration. He challenges investigation at this point, and is willing to abide the decision of candid scrutiny.

But He is not willing to be tried by the standard which Rabbis and Scribes had invented. He appeals continually from tradition and current opinion to the Scriptures. "Search the Scriptures," He says, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." And after His resurrection, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." This was the only safe and satisfactory method; safe for Him, and satisfactory to all who desire to test His claims. The Old Testament, to which he referred, had been translated into Greek by the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus nearly three hundred years prior to his birth, and consequently was familiar to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and no one could have had opportunity or motive, or could have found it practicable, to have interpolated it in favor of Himself. Upon its testimony, therefore, He could securely stand; and to its predictions we can with confidence appeal; and if we shall find that Jesus in all essential respects fulfilled its Messianic prophecies — prophecies, remember, which were in circulation at least three hundred years before His appearance — we may feel assured that He is in truth the Messiah of God, "the Desire of all nations."

In pursuing this investigation we should first consider the outer circumstances of Messiah's life, as foretold by the prophets, and the correspondences which are met with in the

surroundings of Jesus, as described by the evangelists. He was to be of the seed of Abraham, and of the house of David. Through the royal line, to the Father of the Faithful, His human origin was traced. (*Genesis xvii*, 7; *Psalms cxxxii*, 11.) The New Testament writers insist that Jesus was thus descended; and Paul argues that He is the seed of Abraham and that the covenant was confirmed in Him four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law. (*Galatians iii*, 16; *Acts xiii*, 23; *Romans i*, 3.) It was likewise predicted that the Messiah should be born of a virgin, Isaiah exclaiming: "Therefore, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (*Isa. viii*, 24.) You hardly need to be reminded that the Gospels chronicle the fulfillment of the sign, representing Mary as the maiden-mother of our Savior. The time of His birth, as well as its manner, was also definitely fixed by the inspired writers. It was to be before the destruction of the temple, because the Promised One was to enter the sacred house; and His appearing there was to be heralded by a Divinely appointed witness: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and He shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple." "And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory." (*Mal. iii*, 1; *Haggai ii*, 7.) This messenger was undoubtedly John the Baptist—"the voice that crieth in the wilderness," as Isaiah describes him, and to whose fate at the hands of Herod Josephus the historian refers. When Jacob lay dying, and his prophetic eye rested on the future, and as his fatherly hand rested on his son's head in blessing, he said: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (*Genesis xlix*, 10.) It is generally admitted

by expositors that this prediction announced the coming of the Prince of Peace, and at a time when the national life was hastening toward extinction. We know it was during the stormy evening of Israel's existence, fast hastening to night—to night of threefold blackness, and apparently without morning—that Jesus entered on His sacred ministry and gathered the people to Himself—great gathering, which has continued unceasingly ever since. Then it was that the days of the temple were numbered, when the lightnings of wrath were preparing to smite its pride, from whose stroke it would nevermore recover. Taking these signs as a guide, one thing is evident: either Jesus is the Messiah, or no Messiah has ever toiled and taught among men.

But the chronology is even more definitely fixed by Daniel. In the second chapter of the book which bears his name he traces the course of empire from the Chaldean monarchy to the Roman, and declares that, during the period occupied by the latter—that is, from 31 B.C. to 476 A.D.—the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom in the earth. The origin of this kingdom is further particularized in the eighth chapter, where it is written: “That from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”; to which is added another week, in the midst of which He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. It was common among the Old Testament writers to speak of years when employing the term “days.” Thus Moses said of Adam: “All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years.” Laban is also represented as having fulfilled a week, and this week is identified with seven years. The prophets, such as Ezekiel, are instructed that, in the mystic chronology which they are to use, each day is to stand for a year. Daniel's vision we read in the light of these explanations. Seventy weeks of days—a day for

a year — gives us four hundred and ninety years. The decree referred to the restoration of Judah from the Babylonish captivity, and was issued by the Persian Kings. Proclamations were issued by Cyrus, and afterward by Darius ; but the one which was most complete and which gave permission to rebuild, was that which bore the name of Artaxerxes, and which is by many scholars dated B.C. 453 (see *Hengstenberg and Hofman*). Take this figure as our starting point, four hundred and eighty-three years after the Messiah should have been manifested. Now, Jesus was baptized at the age of thirty, and if we add to this four hundred and fifty-three, we have exactly four hundred and eighty-three, leaving one week, or seven years, in the midst of which He was cut off, but not for Himself, during which the covenant was confirmed to the Jews — that is, to them the privileges of the Gospel were practically confined — and at the end of which they were formally extended to the Gentiles. Thus the four hundred and ninety prophetic years were accomplished. It is inconceivable that the agreement which I have pointed out should be other than Providential ; it is too complete to be fortuitous, and its striking exactness convincingly points to Jesus as the Messiah.

To these outer circumstances might be joined others of a nature hardly less decisive, such as the birthplace and the temporal condition of the Promised One. Let it suffice that he was to be born in Bethlehem, and that his rank was to be with the poor of this world (*Micah v, 2*) — predictions which we have in previous discourses seen fulfilled with sad accuracy in the life of Jesus. Thus obscurely did He appear among men, and thus destitute did He pursue His weary way to the grave. But these melancholy externalities need not be considered further, especially as there are other, and, in my opinion, more conclusive evidences to be scrutinized and weighed.

The character of the Messiah, as well as His circumstances, was a theme on which the prophets frequently dwelt. He was painted, not from memory, but from inspired anticipation, and it might well have been doubted whether the original of such a picture would ever appear in the earth. So like a baseless ideal, an impossible hope, a fiction of the imagination does it seem, that we know not which to admire most—the brilliancy of the conception or the boldness of the men who expected it would be realized. These men portrayed a Being who should be called “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” on whom should rest “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of God,” and whose “righteousness should be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.” They represent Him as unostentatious, sympathetic and compassionate, saying: “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench;” yea, they go farther, and declare that “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth”; that “in His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth”; that “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper”; and that “He shall spare the poor and needy, shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their souls be in His sight.” They describe Him as guileless, as inoffensive, as patient and submissive under oppression, as zealous in the work of God, and being a King, as just and lowly. (*Isaiah ix, 6; xi, 2, 5; lxii, 3; liii, 7, 9; Psalms lxxi, 9; lxx; Zechariah ix, 9.*) In these and other Scriptures we have the portrait of One in whom all heavenly and earthly excellencies coexist, who combines with the intelligence of

God, the sensibilities of man, who unites the wisdom of the sage with the courage of the hero; and who strangely blends in one spirit the meekness of the lamb with the temper of the lion. Well is He called "Wonderful" for greater wonder than this ideal is not possible to thought, unless it be its yet more wonderful realization.

But where shall such realization be found? We sit before the picture, and, fascinated by its sublimity, we inquire, "Where, where is the original? Where is the Being who shall venture to assert that it is His own likeness?" The question is not unanswered. Out of the depths of eighteen centuries Jesus replies as He did to the woman of Samaria, saying to us as to her, "I that speak unto thee am He!" "Search the Scriptures," He exclaims, "for they testify of Me!" Of Him! Can it be that these ancient men depicted Him? Can it be that He was the supreme object which they tried so enthusiastically to paint? He says so, and says it calmly, firmly, and even modestly. But this is too grave a matter to rest exclusively on His own word. What is the testimony of those who knew Him best, and who were in every way qualified to give righteous judgment? We must be satisfied on this point, for our souls are at stake. We are either leaning on a broken reed, or on the strong arm of the Son of God. Which?

To the evangelists, His immediate followers, we turn for help, and lo! the character they ascribe to Him as historic we find to be the actual counterpart of what we have seen was prophetic. Jesus of Nazareth was as gentle as the dawn, as pure as the light which penetrates the poisoned atmosphere of our globe without being tainted, as immeasurable in wisdom as the heavens are in expanse, as tender as the dew which refreshes the drooping flower, and as unostentatious; for, like the dew, He sinks unobserved into the heart which He blesses. He was a chorus

of all the virtues, and their voices blended in Him and were yet distinct and answered each other in sweet antiphony. His graces were orchestral, through whose varied movements the diapason of holiness ran, His sympathy and mercy being as bright and swift as an allegro, and His righteousness and justice being as measured and marked as an adagio. He was likewise grave, grand and mysterious. He was a Being whose horizon seemed to be the infinite; yea, He seemed to be overarched and underarched with eternities. His moral stature was so great, so commanding and august, that His disciples were constantly amazed, and praised Him as men struggling with a work beyond their compass. If you read not this in the Gospels, you read in vain. If you read not there His human perfectness, blending with the Divine completeness, you fail to grasp their manifest import; and all unprofitable and inconclusive will your study of their testimony be, if it does not lead you to exclaim, with Montgomery:

“But who shall paint Him? Let the sweetest tone
That ever trembled on the harps of Heaven
Be discord: let the chanting Seraphim,
Whose anthem is eternity, be dumb;
For praise and wonder, adoration — all
Melt into muteness, ere they soar to Thee
Thou sole perfection! theme of countless worlds.”

But that He has fulfilled in His character the Messianic prophecies, is substantiated by others than His followers. Eusebius, for instance, preserves this fragment from the “Philosophy of Oracles” by Porphyry, who was born 233 A.D., and who wrote against Christianity: “What we are going to say, may perhaps appear to some a paradox, for the gods declared Christ to be a person most pious, and become immortal. Moreover, they speak of him honorably.” He adds that Apollo thus answered a question touching the Lord’s divinity: “That he who is renowned

for wisdom knows that the immortal soul continues after the body; but the pious soul of that man is most excellent." Nor do I hazard much when I affirm that infidels with few exceptions confirm the justice of this testimony; and, while rejecting the orthodox conceptions of our Savior's Godhead, have conceded enough to prove His Messiahship. The prophets said the Messiah would be righteous, meek, gracious—a moral marvel among men, and to whom would be given the name "Immanuel;" and infidels admit the blamelessness, the unwavering uprightness, the lowliness—according to Celsus, lowliness excessive and abysmal—and the inexplicableness of Jesus, whom in their perplexity they salute, though with a meaning of their own, as Divine. That is, they call him, "God with us," though they do not agree with Christians as to the manner of God's being with us in Him; and thus to the utmost, and really without intending any such thing, they corroborate the Gospels and prove that Jesus, as far as character is concerned, was the counterpart of the Holy Son of Israel, to whom the prophets bore constant witness.

We come now to a third and final line of evidence. Not only were the outer circumstances and essential character of the Messiah foreshown by prophecy, but His career was likewise traced. Jeremiah predicts the slaughter of the infants and Hosea the calling of the Promised One out of Egypt, implying that to escape the sword in Judea He had been carried into an alien land. (*Jerem. xxxi, 15; Hosea xi, 1.*) Celsus, as quoted by Origen, admits that Jesus was in Egypt, but claims that "He was obliged to serve there for hire, and there learned certain powerful arts for which the Egyptians are renowned." His interpretation of the fact does not at present concern us, only its certitude. But to continue. Isaiah gives an adequate idea of Christ's ministry in the words: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to

preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God" — a ministry which the same prophet declares should open in Galilee. (*Isa. lxi, 1, 2; ix, 1, 2.*) In these discourses we have already seen that this was the spirit of our Lord's ministry, and that He commenced it in "Galilee of the nations." Moreover, it was foretold by Moses that Messiah should be a prophet; by David, that He should preach in parables; by Isaiah, that He should perform miracles; and by them and others, that He should bear reproach; should be rejected by His countrymen; should be betrayed by a friend; should be abandoned by His disciples; should be sold for thirty pieces of silver; should be a sufferer — a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and a sufferer for others; should be nailed to the cross and derided, and, having been put to death, should rise again, ascend to Heaven, and reign as King in Zion forevermore. (*Deut. xviii, 15; Psalms lxix, lxxviii, 2; Isa. xxxv, 5, 6; Psalms xxii, lxix, 7-20; xli, 9; lv, 12-15; Zech. xl, 22; Psalms xvi, 10; lxxiii, 18; lx, 1; ii, 6.*) The Gospels record the complete accomplishment of these predictions in the life of Jesus; and in this series of sermons their conversion into His history has been carefully traced. We need, therefore, at this point, consume no time in repeating what has already been shown, and with which the most superficial reader of the New Testament is familiar. The pre-natal biography of the Messiah, we must all admit, has been exactly fulfilled in Jesus, and, as it could not have been possible, if He was an impostor, to control events so as to produce this result, we must conclude that He was and is the true Messiah.

To this, however, it is objected that Messiah is represented by the prophets as reigning as well as suffering.

Trypho brings this fact to the attention of Justin Martyr, and infers from it — what many have done since — that as our Lord does not maintain on earth the grandeur of earthly majesty he has failed to make good his claim. Of course the reality of the predictions cannot be denied. They are found in the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and David — the first declaring that He shall sit upon the throne of Israel's Royal Singer; the second that He shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; the third that He shall rule and be great to the ends of the world; and the fourth exclaiming: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (*Isaiah ix, 7; Jeremiah xxxiii, 5-6; Micah v, 3-5; Psalm cx, 2-4.*) This is plainly a matter of record, and the only question is, whether, in any just sense, it has come to pass. I think it has; if not completely, at least sufficiently. Remember that David's throne, like the famed seat of Moses, may simply mean the authority wherewith that monarch was invested. In this sense Jesus has certainly succeeded to the scepter of the Psalmist King, for His law is acknowledged generally as supreme, as the last word of moral guidance issuing from the mouth of eternity, and if I mistake not is coming to be recognized even by large bodies of the Jewish people. It should also be remembered that the insignia of royalty do not make a monarch; that Cromwell was more of a king than the ermined Charles; and that, consequently, we have no right to deny the reality of Christ's reign because the external paraphernalia are wanting. His sovereignty is hardly disputable. Everywhere there are loyal thousands who delight to do His will, and the history of eighteen centuries reveals Him governing supremely in the world. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the seat of Messiah's administration was to be on the earth; nay, rather, David's language implies that it

was to be in Heaven. Thither we know our Savior departed, and from the right hand of the Majesty on High He rules the nations. Hence we claim that even the predictions that relate to His exaltation have been accomplished, and that what remains, though it tarry, shall not fail. Jesus shall yet answer these cavilers with such a manifestation of His glory as shall forever remove all doubts, for it is written by prophets and apostles that "He shall come the second time, without sin into salvation," when shall be given Him, before an assembled universe, "dominion and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him, which dominion is an everlasting dominion, that shall not pass away"; and then "He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

"We have found the Messiah." Thank God, many have; but have you, my people? Are you searching for Him toward whom the eyes of humanity have been turned with longings, and who is able to save you to the uttermost? If you are, these poor words of mine may aid you to a happy issue; yea, and if you are still seeking in earnest sincerity, though my speech may be serviceless, Jesus will not be negligent of your desires, but will draw you closer to Himself, as He did Andrew, and in the sweet intercourse of soul He will disclose to you, as to the fisherman, His Messianic glory. Let me pray you to rest not in the evidences which I have sketched, even though they may be satisfactory to your head; but rather seek the witness in your heart, and then shall you know for yourself that He is the Holy One of Israel; and then, like Andrew, shall you spread the news abroad and cause the Messiah, found by you, to be found by thousands who yet are groping in the darkness of doubt and sin.

XXVI.

THE IMPORT OF JESUS.

“What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?”—*Matt. xxii, 42.*

WE have already seen that the might of the mighty, the wisdom of the wise, the grace of the beautiful, the majesty of the great, the purity of the sinless, the humility of the lowly, the anguish of the afflicted, the poverty of the indigent, and the compassion of the sympathetic blended in the character and career of Jesus as the seven tints in the iris bow, and we have already intimated that more than a human halo streamed from His person, and that His myriad virtues demand more than earthly soil to account for their vigor and grandeur. As we have contemplated His many-sided excellencies, we have found ourselves exclaiming:

“Thro’ countless means, one solemn end foreshown,
The labyrinth closes at a single Throne.”

The Phidian Jove, ennobled by stately thought and “brows that sentence worlds,” the Apollo Belvedere, radiant with immortal youth and crowned with beauty, and all the other outbursts of genius seeking to represent, whether in art that charms and fascinates or in eloquence that thrills and burns, the glory of the Supreme, have sadly failed to satisfy the longings of the soul; for the image of the Divine can no more be imparted to stone or speech than “the light-scattering wings of morning” can be sculptured in marble or portrayed on canvas. But that which we find not in man’s masterly conceptions we recog-

nize in Jesus, and feel that He is not only "the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely," but is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person."

An English writer, Rev. J. W. Reynolds, in a recent volume on the *Supernatural*, groups together in the following striking language the considerations which impel him to exalt Jesus above the highest rank of creaturehood: "The Holy Personality was not the slow combined product of a world-spirit, stirring, with high culture, a greatly-gifted race; nor a moral development equipped in the school and cultured in the palace. Jesus, the child of poor parents, educated as a carpenter's son, nurtured in Nazareth, of almost homeless poverty; was it possible for such a child, if but a child, to become that God-man of work so mighty? Contrast His humility with Jewish pride, His charity with their fanaticism, His expansiveness with their narrowness: you will say that He is one whom they could neither produce nor invent. The prophesied of, yet secret One,—ever hidden from their eyes; their honor and their shame; inextricably woven into their history, yet always nationally refused. For nineteen hundred years He has been the center and cause of all moral and spiritual development among the wisest nations, outside of these nations exists little knowledge, * * * yet, except in early childhood, he never stepped beyond the confines of Palestine. * * * Time chronicles centuries, myriads die; Jesus, imperishable as gold, lives forever; binds the heart of the world to Himself with electric chains; tells how the soul, weak and wandering like a storm-driven bird, may nestle in the bosom of our Holy Father. In the spirits of men, where sin has opened an unfathomable depth of anguish, He causes streams of consolation to flow, and fill that depth. He makes our eye to sparkle with light, and our cheek to glow with a strangely sweet

aspect of those who look into far-off worlds, and gladly hasten thither." Nor are men who, like Reynolds, are imbued with evangelical sentiments the only ones who have suspected that Jesus is more than His earthly appearance would at first seem to warrant.

Tennyson voices the conviction of many deep thinkers, profound philosophers, and brilliant rationalists when he sings:

"Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

* * * *

Thou seemest human and Divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Though they differ in their definitions and explanations of the mystery, it is remarkable how many minds, not distinctively theological, and minds even antagonizing with theology, regard our Savior as the complete and final manifestation of the Deity. Schelling teaches that in Him the Divine and human are united. Julius Müller claims that the Divine Essence is speculatively made known through Christ, and that this doctrine is common ground. Schlegel discards with scorn the theory that Christ was a Jewish Socrates who met with a fate no less deplorable for mankind than that which befel the Athenian sage, and adds: "If Christ were not more than a Socrates, then a Socrates He was not." He argues, moreover, that such a comparison is "unhistorical and anti-historical," as

it is in "utter opposition to all covenants, testimonials, authentic records, and our Lord's own express declarations," and, if admitted, "the whole history of the world would be an insoluble enigma—an inexplicable labyrinth—a huge pile of the blocks and fragments of an unfinished edifice—and the great tragedy of humanity would remain devoid of all proper result." Lessing is equally positive; for he writes: "If Christ is not truly God, then Mahometanism was an undoubted improvement on the Christian religion. Mahomet, on such a supposition, would indisputably have been a greater man than Christ, as he would have been far more veracious, more circumspect, and more zealous for the honor of God, since Christ by His expressions would have given dangerous occasion for idolatry; while, on the other hand, not a single expression of the kind can be laid to the charge of Mahomet." Another writer, Keim, adopting rationalistic methods, from the study of our Savior's sinlessness arrives at this conclusion: "In the life of Jesus, where the most genuine and unadulterated humanity dwelt, was revealed at the same time not only a religious genius, but the miracle of God and His presence upon earth." And even Renan says, though the statement taken in any intelligible sense is subversive of his entire theory: "The Christ of the Gospels is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal. His reign shall never end;" while Kant, when Borowski associated too intimately the name of Jesus with his, said with modest earnestness: "The one name is holy, the other is that of a poor bungler doing his best to interpret Him." Such citations as these could be indefinitely multiplied, all tending to show the impression which the Savior has made upon the world, and the necessity we are under of approaching the study of His import in a spirit of reverent thoughtfulness; but these must suffice, and these seem to

speak as with the voice of God, saying, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they drew near to Him, inwardly pleased that their rivals had been discomfited, and one of their number, a lawyer, undertook to measure strength with Him in debate. His success was far from gratifying. But now that Jesus had a group of these extreme religionists together, and as they were in a disputatious mood, He availed Himself of the opportunity to catechize them a little. Hence He asked, "What think ye of Christ?" that is, What think ye of the Messiah, whom ye are expecting? "Whose Son is He?" It is as though He inquired, To what rank in the hierarchy of being do you assign Him? How far is He from the highest? What His nature? What His dignity? What estimate should be formed of Him? The Pharisees immediately replied, doubtless amazed that He should ask so simple a question, "The son of David." But the Master proceeded to show that this is not all that is to be said on the subject, and that it cannot thus be hastily dismissed. He therefore inquired, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord (JEHOVAH) said unto my Lord (ADONAI) Sit Thou at my right hand?" The Psalmist in this passage (*Ps. cx, 1*) recognizes the Messiah as already existing, though He was not to be manifested on earth for many centuries, and applies to Him one of the names which describe the Deity. How, then, could He be considered merely as the offspring of David, as a creature like himself, when He is thus addressed and thus exalted? The Pharisees are quick enough to discern whither they are being led, and, fearing to be compromised, they hazard no reply. But though the discussion was not protracted and was abruptly closed, we perceive that Jesus, claiming to be the Christ, was in this indirect

fashion asserting His own divinity. The appeal which He thus makes to the Old Testament naturally inclines us to scrutinize its testimony on this point yet closer and farther.

Who, then, was the Being foreshown by the prophets as coming for the redemption of the world? The Apostle John refers to Isaiah as beholding the glory of Messiah, and when we turn to the vision alluded to we find that the prophet there represents Him as sitting upon a throne, worshiped by the angels, who cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." (*John xii, 41; Isa. vi, 1-4*). The name and the homage pertaining to the Infinite are ascribed to the Savior, and the inference is irresistible that He is what they denote. In other passages we likewise find the New Testament writers identifying Jesus with Jehovah of the Old. Thus they declare that He was born of a virgin; but He who was to be thus born was to be called, "The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." It was Jesus, according to Paul, who led Israel in the wilderness; it was Jehovah, according to Moses. In *Hebrews* Moses is represented as preferring the reproach of Jesus to the treasures of Egypt; in *Exodus* it is Jehovah for whom he suffers the loss of all things. (*Isaiah ix, 6; 1 Cor. x; Exodus xvii; Heb. xi; Exod. x.*) The approach of the Coming One is thus heralded: "A voice crying in the wilderness, prepare ye a way for Jehovah! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!" "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; * * * and this is the name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Our Righteousness." "Behold I send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me, * * * saith Jehovah of Hosts." (*Isaiah xl; Jeremiah xxxiii; Mal. iii.*) These predictions point to the revelation, the manifestation, the incarnation of the Highest in the Christ; and evangelists and apostles maintain their fulfillment in Jesus, a position which Jesus

Himself assumes to be true. They all imply, if they do not assert, His preëxistence. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am," was the reply of Jesus to those who intimated that He was not yet fifty years old. And John proves that we do not misapprehend the Savior's meaning; for he testifies: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" "All things were made by Him;" and "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Equally decisive, the mysterious declaration of Jesus, "And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man who is in Heaven;" language which recalls the significant prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (*John viii, 58; i, 1-15; xvii, 5; iii, 13.*) The force of these texts, and the thought which they express, contained in many others, cannot well be evaded. They declare that He to whom they refer is the "First," as He is likewise called "the Last"—that in a sense higher than is intended when Melchizedec is represented as without sacerdotal ancestry, He is "without beginning or end of days," and that "He was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." His mere preëxistence, we admit, does not prove His divinity, though, taken in connection with what we have seen was announced by the prophets, we cannot honestly see how it is to be denied, and, viewed in the light of what is said regarding its essential grandeur, we cannot perceive how His Godhood can be seriously challenged.

He is frequently and unhesitatingly spoken of as the supreme and all-glorious existence. For instance, Jesus is expressly and repeatedly called "God" by the New Testament writers, as the Messiah is called the Jehovah by the Old. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." "And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and

my God." "The word was God." "This is the true God and eternal life." And the evangelists teach us to look for the "glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ." It is sometimes said that Jesus never assumed this exalted rank; and yet we know that His enemies condemned Him for making Himself God. To Him they explain their antagonism in these words: "Because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." *Heb. i, 8; John xx, 28; John i, 1; I John v, 20; Tit. ii, 13; John x, 33.* The celebrated text, "God manifest in the flesh" (*I Tim. iii, 16*), which has been a fruitful source of controversy, has been altered by the Canterbury revisers; and because they have omitted the Divine name it has been inferred that it can no longer serve to strengthen the central dogma of orthodoxy. But this is a rash conclusion. Though the name may have no place in the text, the doctrine of the incarnation cannot be eliminated from it. When we examine it, we are led irresistibly to inquire: Who was it that was "manifest in the flesh" if it was not God? That which is revealed, disclosed, exhibited, must previously have existed. We do not say that an infant is "manifest" in the flesh when it is born, for it had no prenatal being in some other world. Why should it have been worthy of note if an angelic creature had been the manifested one? Angels had frequently appeared, and the announcement that another had unveiled his splendor among men would hardly have called for special comment. That no such idea was intended is evident from the fact that whatever or whoever was manifested "was seen of angels," and impliedly was not an angel. Moreover, whoever it was became the object of faith, and was "received into glory," and the Lord Jehovah is the only Being in whom we are authorized to trust, and the only Being who is enshrined in supreme majesty and power. Creatures

render glory. The Creator is the only Being who receives it, at least He is the only Being to whom it can be offered without sin. We consequently conclude as the Apostle in the preceding verses speaks of the Church of the living God, however awkward the transition may seem, an awkwardness which the new version has not remedied, and, though the Divine name in the text may be an interpolation, that Paul had in mind its Infinite Builder, and is recording in the disputed passage His mysterious incarnation, humiliation and exaltation. But whether this is a fair inference from the text or not, we know that in other Scriptures not only the titles but the attributes of Jehovah are ascribed to Jesus. Of Him it is said that He is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, who was, and who is to come;" that "He is before all things and by Him all things consist; for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in the earth;" that "He upholds all things by the word of His power;" that "He knows all things;" that "He searcheth the reins and the hearts;" and is with His people whenever they meet, and will be with them until the end of the world. (*Rev. i, 8; Col. i, 16, 17; Heb. i, 3; John xxi, 17; Rev. ii, 23; Math. xviii, 20; xxviii, 20.*) That is, He is eternal, immortal, omnipotent, omniscient; the Creator and Preserver of all things "that are in Heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible." "All things were created by Him and for Him." More than this could not be affirmed, and no more is required to establish the august claims which we are defending.

While we might rest the argument here, there are considerations suggested by the fact that this Pre-Existence, this Supreme Existence, became the Condescending Existence, which deserve attention, and which add to its force and conclusiveness; for well has Ullman, in his *Sinlessness of Jesus*, said, "The source of His greatness is not His

ascending, but His condescending, not rising above men, but letting Himself down to them." The Apostle Paul writes to the Hebrews concerning Christ, "Verily, He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." (*Heb. ii, 16, 17.*) Here His proper and complete humanity is affirmed. He is represented as bending to take hold of something. Lower than the angels He bent, hence He was higher than they; He descended to man's level, then surely in original dignity He immeasurably outranks him. The same Apostle testifies: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." (*II Cor. viii, 9.*) But when was Jesus rich? Buddha we know was a king's son, had the revenues of a monarchy at his disposal, and repudiated them; but there is nothing corresponding to this in the biography of Jesus. He was born in poverty, He lived and died in poverty; He never possessed earthly wealth, and consequently never surrendered it. The affluence referred to, therefore, must be Heavenly and spiritual. He abandoned His crown and throne and submitted to man's estate, and though that estate had been blessed with worldly treasures, in comparison with what He had laid down it would still have been a condition of abject penury. Further, it is said that "He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. * * * Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." (*Phil. ii, 6-9.*) On this passage permit a few reflections. The apostle is exhorting to humanity, and presents Jesus as an inspiring example. But if He was a creature, even the loftiest, wherein does the condescension appear? Not surely in

His aspiring to be equal with God, for that were vain and reprehensible presumption. If He was only a creature, the exaltation promised, exceeding in grandeur and blessedness anything ever attained by angels or principalities, obscures His lowliness of spirit; for He was only submitting to mean conditions for the sake of gratifying shoreless ambition. Were the President of the United States to say to a poor man, "Join the army and I will make you General," would it be thought condescending, with this prospect in view, for him to do as he was told? No; in such a case there would neither be self-sacrifice nor self-depreciation exhibited; and neither would they have been apparent in Jesus if from the ranks of creaturehood He had stepped forth to take a cross which would lead inevitably to a crown, and a crown such as is here described, universal and supreme in authority. If, on the other hand, we regard "form of God" and "form of servant" as equivalents, teaching that he was actually God as He was actually man, then in taking our nature and becoming obedient to death, His self-abasement is evident; for no degree of honor to which He could attain could possibly surpass that which was originally His, however it might vary in kind or become more pronounced and conspicuous in display.

In the light of this Scripture testimony, which could be greatly augmented, it is not surprising that the Church should maintain the proper Divinity of our Lord. This she has done by councils, confessions, and martyrdoms, and to-day she is as confident that this is the true faith as ever in the past. To her Jesus is, as Irenæus expresses it, "Born and unborn, God in flesh, life in death, born of Mary, born of God;" or, as Bishop Hopkins has it, she declares, "In Him omnipotence became weak; eternity mortal; innocence itself guilty; God man; the Creator a creature; the Maker of all, His own workmanship;

“ A King, without regalia,
A God, without the thunder,
A child, without the heart for play;
Ay, a Creator, rent asunder
From his first glory, and cast away
In His own world.”

Yes, according to the Inspired Book, Jesus is the meeting place of two worlds—the human world and the Divine. The essence of all Being centers in Him. Godhood and manhood are united in Him forever. Limitless ubiquity enshrines itself in limitable space, measureless eternity enfolds itself in measurable time, incomprehensible infinity clothes itself with comprehensible finitude. The inscrutable becomes the familiar, the unknown the known, the invisible the visible, the spiritual the incarnate, and the total result is Jesus of Nazareth.

Great, indeed, is the mystery of Godliness, but not irrational! The testimonies with which we introduced this discourse go to show that the deepest thinkers have regarded some special manifestation of Divinity in humanity as credible and reasonable. The profoundest philosophers have proceeded on the assumption that in the processes of nature and history the Absolute must be revealed, as some claim thereby attaining to self-consciousness, and if such is the case, then it is no more than probable that such an unfolding should reach its sublime climax in one final and supreme incarnation. Poets as well as philosophers have celebrated the immanence of the Creator in His works, and have taught us, though Pantheism is untrue, that His relations to all things are more intimate and abiding than mechanical theories of the universe will allow. Thus Coleridge, in harmonious lines, inquires:

“ And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o’er them sweeps

Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each, and God of All?"

With Wordsworth, likewise, God is in everything, abiding everywhere: He sings, His

"Dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky and in the mind of man
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Our own higher moods confirm these sentiments; for there are times when we are conscious of an individual life that is not our own, of thought, impulse, inspiration, which we in vain try to trace to our poor earthly souls, and which we are obliged to ascribe to the Almighty. The unapproachable creations of genius we instinctively attribute to this source, and the nobler forms of goodness we account for in the same way. Thus our own experiences, as well as the uttered sentiments of thoughtful minds, prepare us to receive the announcement of an incarnation which surpasses in grandeur and wonder every other instance of Divine indwelling, and they constrain us to admit its credibility, even though it may be so far removed from that with which we are familiar as to render it inexplicable.

And it is inexplicable. "Great is the mystery of Godliness," great in the days of the apostles, and as great a mystery still. All the skill, penetration and investigation which have been devoted to this subject have failed to lay bare the principle common to the Divine and human natures which must form the nexus by which their union is rendered possible. How these natures coëxist without collision, and how it comes to pass that the diverse is not, in this instance, the incongruous, no mind has comprehended. We cannot conceive how the finite can coëxist

with the infinite, or how the absolute can become the relative. Yet let us not forget, as Mansel has pointed out, that these difficulties lie principally against every form of the finite, and that it is as easy to believe the incarnation as it is to believe that the Infinite called the finite into being without augmenting the amount of existence, for if existence was not augmented He was not previously Infinite. "The coëxistence of the Infinite and the finite in any manner whatever is inconceivable by reason; and the only ground that can be taken for accepting one representation of it rather than another, is that one is revealed, and another is not revealed." We must, therefore, abandon all attempts to explore and explain this mystery of our faith, even as we are forced to leave unsolved the enigmas that confront us on all sides in space, in gravitation, in time, in life; yea, and in all things from the electric spark to the fiery sun, from the mollusk to the man, and from the man to the angel. What is revealed must content us. We must rest satisfied with the knowledge of the fact, and with such dim apprehensions of it as are possible to our poor understandings. What we know, and may feel certain of, is that the Logos took the human into abiding fellowship with Himself, and dwelt in, thought, willed, and felt in and through the human, and so became, as Shedd expressed it, a sort of resultant person, "neither human nor Divine but Divine-human"—the God-man. Just as man dwells in the body, and in this life thinks, wills and acts in it and by it, so the Divine, at least in some such sense, thought, wrought and suffered in and through the human nature which he assumed. Hence the "judicious Hooker" (*Eccl. Pol., Book V, Chap. 53*) remarks: "By reason not of two persons linked in amity, but of two natures, human and Divine, conjoined in one and the same person, the God of glory may be said as well to have suffered death as to have raised the dead

from their graves, the Son of Man as well to have made as redeemed the world." Moreover, as He revealed and manifested Himself through the human, the human itself grew, expanded and developed, every volition and movement of the Divine, quickening its powers, enlarging its intelligence and perfecting its graces. We have in this conception of the mysterious union an explanation of the oblivion to His higher nature, which at the first characterized the man Jesus, of His subsequent and gradual consciousness of its reality and greatness, and of His mental and spiritual progress—a progress which we have shown in a former discourse was too wonderful to be accounted for satisfactorily by external circumstances. It was the stirrings and operations of the Divine in Christ's humanity that at last imparted to that humanity the complete consciousness of its own significance and of its exalted fellowship, and these were also the means of its preternatural and otherwise inexplicable development.

This much we know, or may infer from the history of Jesus and the testimony of His disciples; and this much is imperatively demanded to account for Him intelligently. But here inquiry is arrested, and dense clouds of impenetrable mystery roll over the immense expanse of this fathomless ocean. Its shore-line we can scarcely see. Only through a slight rift in its clouds can we look, but this must satisfy us until the dawning of the eternal morning, when the Sun of suns shall disperse all darkness from this sea, which, however enshrouded, is the only one that affords to souls a safe passage from a world of sin and guilt to a world of righteousness.

"What think ye of Christ?" The wise King wrote: "As a man thinks so is he." And equally true it is that what you think of Christ will determine what he is to your souls. Theories do not change or modify realities. The earth would not cease to be round though all men

should unite in declaring it flat and square. Neither do multiplied denials of our Lord's Godhood render Him any less Divine. He is what He is whatever may be man's opinions. But what men believe regarding Him must affect themselves. If they count Him merely human, how can they trust Him for salvation, how can they suppose that His righteousness avails for them, and how can they imagine that He is able to give them power to become the sons of God? They cannot; and in proof of it they who reject His supreme Lordship do not receive Him in His mediatorial offices, even though the Scriptures teach that He is our redemption and sanctification. But, on the other hand, conceive of Him as the Substance of Eternity imprisoned in the Symbol of Time, as the Infinite Circumference finding its abiding center in man, as the Exhaustless Affluence enriching all worlds, and what is there that He is incapable of accomplishing? To such a Being we must admit all things are possible, and when we hear of Him we must expect that He will act in harmony with Himself; and hence when he proposes to render the incoherent coherent, the disorderly orderly, the doubtful certain, the carnal spiritual, and the mortal immortal, we cannot be surprised. We feel that God should be and do in manner Godlike. This is not only piety, it is logic. If, then, you thus think of Him He will be everything to you, will minister to your peace of mind, your elevation and usefulness; to your peace, for you will realize His ability to save to the uttermost; to your elevation, for you will come to see in the incarnation the promise of God's indwelling in the race; and to your usefulness, for you will come to consider His condescension the truest mark of His greatness, and will aim to bend as He bent to the lowest depths that your fellows may be saved. Thus, thinking aright of Christ is thinking aright of Christianity, and thinking aright of Christianity is the surest way

of ministering to its power and permanence in society. For these reasons, doubtless, the Apostles did everything they could to exalt Christ in the intellect and heart of the people; and for these reasons I have spoken as I have in this discourse, confident, if the message is received, that it will lead you, my people, to nobler endeavors, and you, my unconverted hearers, to assured peace and unending joy.

There is a famous Head of Christ by Leonardo Da Vinci in the Cathedral at Antwerp, which is quite remarkable, apart from its artistic merits, on account of a very startling effect which it produces on the mind of all who examine it closely. The eyes of the head appear to follow the man who looks on it steadily. It makes no difference in what direction he turns, or from what point or angle he chooses to view the picture, the mild, pathetic, pleading eyes pursue him. He cannot escape from their gaze. They search him out, they seem to move as he moves, and to meet him at every change of his position. What the painter suggests by this wonderful portrait is everlastingly true. The eyes of Jesus are everywhere. They rest on all the diverse interests and complicated affairs of this distressed, distracted and despairing earth, on its fame and its shame, on its gladness and sorrow, on its struggling and perishing vanities, and on its sin growing into crime, and on its crime deepening into abysmal misery. To Him who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," we may apply the sublime words of the Psalmist, "If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Yes, this is our confidence. If He sees, it is to help. The hand follows the eyes, omnipresence guides omnipotence, and He is everywhere that

He may be everything to His creatures. Being what He is, "the image of the invisible God," in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," He must see the troubled, toiling, tempted and tortured millions to console and sanctify, and to work out potently, though inscrutably, the high and blessed purposes of His grace. No arm can thwart Him, no perverse and stubborn resistance can withstand Him, and no combination of men, or of men and devils, can prevail against Him. Before Him "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

This is our encouragement amid manifold perplexities, trials and defeats. The import of Jesus assures society, whether it believes or disbelieves, that One is reigning over and in all of its movements, revolutions, and endless transformations, and that He will at last bring everything to a happy and glorious issue. Men tell us that Christianity is but a phase of universal superstition, an illusion to be dispelled by the "march of progress," an iris bow cast on the dark clouds of time by the imagination, which shall melt at last into the blackness of night. It is not true. Let us not forget that back of rainbows there is the sun. The bow may disappear, but light remains; for the sun is permanent and enduring. Forms and types of religion may change, they may come and they may go, but their source and their substance abideth forever. When crossing the Atlantic I was permitted to witness a scene which surpassed in beauty my fairest dreams. Clouds lay on the horizon's verge, dark and forbidding; the atmosphere was charged with moisture, and the declining sun was veiled from sight. But as the good ship ploughed her way, leaving behind

her silver furrows, a rainbow suddenly appeared spanning the ocean, forming a radiant arch toward which she drove as though impatient to pass through it to a calmer sea. I need hardly say that her efforts were unavailing. As she advanced, the golden gateway receded, and still receded. Another bow was formed, and yet another, but at last they all vanished. The circling glory was evanescent. It came and it went; but as we turned with disappointment from the prow of the vessel, we beheld the sun. There it shone in the west, resplendent, gorgeous, fiery, as it hath shone on weary mariners in the ages gone, and as it shall shine in the ages yet unborn. Our theories of religion, our conceptions, speculations, and even our proud sectarianisms, are not unlike the iris that gleamed over the mighty sea, and our humanity is not unlike that sea, wild and turbulent, which furnished the watery element for the glittering arch. From man's mind, from his imagination, if you will, stream thoughts, impressions, hopes and fears, that supply the material, which, when touched by Heaven's inspiration, takes form in creeds, and schools and churches. These, however would be impossible, but for the "Sun of Righteousness" who irradiates them all, who imparts to them whatever of spiritual splendor they possess, and who shall beam and shine when all earthly conceits and pious visions have given place to the pure light which at last shall flood the world with holy beauty. Rainbows perish, but, remember, suns endure. Your opinions, and my guesses and hypotheses, may be unsubstantial and be doomed to oblivion, but the Christ who is higher and grander than them all shall survive, and shall preserve His truth wherever it has been proclaimed, and shall triumph gloriously over all adversaries when "He comes the second time without sin unto salvation."

Heine was not mistaken, when, after describing the banqueting of the Homeric gods, he represented, whether in

jest or in earnest we know not, the approach of a pale-faced Jew, with blood upon his brow, and bearing a heavy cross, at whose presence the pagan deities grew pale and vanished. He was right in supposing that Jesus and His cross had upturned the old creeds, had dethroned the antique gods, and had inaugurated a new era. All this the Savior accomplished; and all this warrants the belief that every impediment that retards the advancement of His kingdom shall be removed, and every enemy be finally subdued. That this conviction is not the result of sanguine dreams, but rests alike on what Jesus is and on what He has done, Rev. O. B. Frothingham, than whom no better, and certainly no more impartial a witness, could be found, has clearly shown. In an article published last April on *Criticism and Christianity*, he has pointed out the fact that the assaults on the Bible have not in the least invalidated the cardinal truths of religion. His utterances on this point are worthy consideration, not merely on account of their evident soundness, but on account of their author's previously reiterated aversion to orthodoxy. We give a single passage from this striking paper printed in the *North American Review*, which should shame into boldness and confidence the weak victims inside the fold of a yet weaker, though somewhat wolfish, infidelity outside. He says, referring to the outcome of modern criticism:

“The lesson of all this is the absolute distinction between investigation into the natural genesis or the historical development of instituted forms, whether of observance or belief, and the principles of religious trust. Push criticism to its farthest point, still there is a line it cannot pass over. Give real scholarship its rein in the study of the Old Testament; in the study of the New Testament; in the attempt to find the causes of observance, doctrine, church; in the effort to account for the selection of canonical writings; in the endeavor to explain the life of Jesus;

demand of it acuteness, perseverance, frankness; make its difficult task as easy as readiness to accept results can make it. Its tether is short enough at the best, for the validity of spiritual truth is beyond the reach of its sharpest instruments, and whatever results may be arrived at, faith can have nothing to fear. Suppose every miracle to be discredited; suppose doubt to be thrown on the whole legend of the Gospels; suppose the theory advanced in *Christ the Spirit*, namely, that the story of Jesus is mythical, to be demonstrated as far as it can be, still the religion is untouched. Neither the Trinity, nor the Deity of Christ, nor the virtue of the Eucharist, nor the reality of an Eternal Life, rests on the Bible; if they did, they would never have existed at all. This has been said a great many times, and should be a commonplace idea now. Yet there are critics who fancy that criticism will destroy Christianity, and there are Christians who fear that the critics will take away their birthright. It is no matter for surprise that believers should take up arms in defense of favorite books or characters, for it is not human to surrender without a struggle what one loves; but it is astonishing that thinking men of this generation should feel that their defeat imperiled the citadel of faith; that grief should be identical with despair."

Such, then, is the testimony of one who for years has been known as the leading Freethinker of America, and such testimony, taken in connection with the incomparable grandeur of Christ's person, cannot fail to deepen the conviction that no weapon formed against Him can prosper, and that however the faith of His disciples may falter, He Himself "shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law."

It is recorded by Luke that when Jesus ascended to Heaven after His resurrection, His disciples worshiped

Him. In Heaven itself, as revealed by John, that worship is maintained by saints and angels. And rising from this evening's study, that spirit should be ours, and as we go forth meditating on the Christ of whom we have heard, the words of Peter should be in our hearts and on our lips: "To Him be glory, both now and forever. Amen."

"We sing to Thee, Thou Son of God,
Fountain of life and grace;
We praise Thee, Son of Man, whose blood
Redeemed our fallen race.

Thee we acknowledge God and Lord,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Who art by heaven and earth adored,
Worthy o'er both to reign.

Through all the world, Thy churches join
To call on Thee, their Head,
Brightness of majesty Divine,
Who every power hast made.

Among their number, Lord, we love
To sing Thy precious blood.
Reign here, and in the worlds above,
Thou Holy Lamb of God !"

XXVII.

THE FUTURE OF JESUS.

I will come again.—*John xiv, 3.*

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.—*Revelation xxi, 20.*

THE eye taught by civilization beholds in granite and marble quarries the fair promise of future cities, of stately edifices, magnificent temples, and of the varied and beauteous forms which art and genius can impart to stone. To the mind instructed in the annals of the race, mighty navies are visible in the tall, sinewy trees of virgin forests, and blazing fires on happy hearths are seen emerging from dark and forbidding coal fields. Potentially the structures, improvements, inventions, and whatsoever of material splendor or utility shall distinguish the coming time, exist already in the boundless resources of physical nature. He who could compass and measure the treasures of the latter could almost give an inventory of the former. While he could not anticipate the details of the labor nor describe in advance the precise fashions and shapes which human ingenuity shall give to its creations, and while he could not foresee the voyages which the yet unmade ships shall take, nor all the circumstances which shall attend the building of the yet unprojected houses, he could sum up and portray, at least roughly and in outline, the results of material progress as they shall be in future ages.

Much more can the student of Holy Writ determine the moral and religious development of the world from the teachings of prophecy. History is foreshadowed in

the Sacred Books, and may there be read, as the character of a proposed palace or cathedral may be traced in the working plans of the architect. But it should be remembered that there is much in the way of minutiae which cannot be discerned and which defies the skill of the interpreter to sketch. He cannot be certain about dates, and when several events occur together he cannot dogmatize about their order, neither can he be sure of the application of particular predictions. He sees "through a glass darkly." The future lies in a mist, and he should be satisfied with the dim glimpse which is granted him of bold headlands, quiet valleys, and frowning mountain ranges. When this is not the case, and when he undertakes to give a specific account of everything that is to be, he involves himself in contradictions, and is betrayed into evident absurdities. From this fruitful source of mischief have arisen ridiculous processionings toward Jerusalem, ascension programmes, and other farcical proceedings which scandalize Christianity, and which bring its revelations into contempt. If, therefore, in this discourse, I confine myself to what is plain, and avoid what is obscure, it is because I am convinced that any other course would launch us on a stormy sea of incertitude, devoid of beacons and destitute of harbors.

We crave completeness in everything, whether in the process of nature or in the affairs of human life. The flower that never blooms, the corn that never ripens, the orchard that never bears, and the fruit that never mellows we turn from with a sense of disappointment. Their promise has not been redeemed. We would rather own a century-plant whose floral glory we should never see, but which would assuredly delight the eyes of our children, than an annual whose vitality exhausted itself in robing its form in mantle of green and never served to crown its brow with variegated beauty. So, likewise, we grieve when

genius is suddenly eclipsed, when strenuous exertion fails of adequate return, when self-sacrifice and heroism seem to be wasted, and when great movements end in disaster and shame. Now, it must impress us that the career of Jesus demands something more than a resurrection from the dead and an ascension into Heaven. We are not satisfied with the climax. As far as it goes, it is well enough; but it does not go far enough. If this is all, if the ages are to witness an endless repetition of what has been, if the struggle between good and evil is to continue pretty much as in the past, only varied by slight advantages on one side or the other, and if there is to be no decisive and triumphant outcome of the work which our Lord inaugurated, then there is an incompleteness about it which is hardly reconcilable with any fair idea of its Divine origin. It will not do to say that Christianity is a flower whose roots are in the earth and its blossoms in Heaven, that the beginnings are beneath and the consummations above, for we feel that what has been commenced here should be perfected here. If Christ brought salvation to this world, then in this world ought it to be fully accomplished; all its blessings, fruits, and achievements should be witnessed in the very domain where they were first projected. This feeling the Scriptures abundantly justify. They foretell the time when Jesus shall return and finish the salvation which He began in tears and blood, when He shall restore all things, when the works of the Devil shall be destroyed, and when the drama of redemption shall find a fitting close in glory everlasting. And it is to this future of our Lord I would direct your thoughts in bringing this sermon-series to an end.

The promise of a second advent was not an after-thought, much less was it a shrewd invention of cunning priests to account for ancient predictions which failed of fulfillment in the life of Christ, and neither was it a device

to strengthen faith in the Gospels by placing its triumphs in a far-off era, and in connection with a remarkable group of events which would maintain constant expectations, though they might never be realized. It was uttered by Christ Himself, as in the text, not once, but frequently. To the disciples He said, "I will come again," and to the malignant priests He confessed Himself the Anointed One who should yet be seen in the glory of His Father. Some of his parables, such as that of the rich nobleman who goes to a distant land to procure a kingdom and return, involve this hope; and His sermon preceding His arrest, while devoted in no small degree to the destruction of Jerusalem, brings out very vividly the certainty and manner of His return to earth. The Apostles, likewise, dwell on this expectation in such a way as to preclude the supposition that they were trying to blind the eyes of their followers to defects and discrepancies in the Christian scheme. Their revelations on this subject harmonize too fully with what had preceded, and partake too strictly of the nature of a climax and *dénouement* for them to be liable to any such suspicions. From the first, it is contemplated as inevitable, and enters so largely into the subject of the inspired writings that it is not only impossible to regard it as a hasty expedient to meet emergencies, but equally impossible to escape the inference that it is a doctrine of transcendent importance. Next to the absurdity of imagining the doctrine to be an afterthought ranks the infatuation of those who speak of it in disparaging tones as of very little moment and as unworthy serious consideration. For such an opinion there is no sufficient ground. Whatever the Almighty has taken pains to make known is deserving of earnest endeavors to understand. And if it has been abused, perverted, and made the occasion of fanaticisms and extravagances, as the hope of the second advent has — and what article of the creed has not? — there seems to

me to be an additional obligation resting on the expositor to rescue it from the misinterpretation of its friends and from the malignant slanders of its enemies. Nor can it surely be otherwise than spiritually profitable to contemplate the triumphant approach of Him who

“ Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend
Propitious in His chariot paved with love ;
And what His storms have blasted and defaced,
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.”

Jesus is to come personally. This is the plain import of His own words, and of those spoken on this subject by His disciples; and in this respect His second coming is similar to His first. I know there is a vague impression abroad that it sometimes denotes a spiritual and providential manifestation. But were this the case, the confusion would be lamentable and endless. If identical phraseology is employed to describe different events we never can be certain which is intended, and for all practical purposes a revelation is worse than useless. The brethren who so ardently insist on attaching a metaphorical or mystical signification to the language which refers to the second advent should remember that they are sharpening a sword on both edges. If they are warranted by the exigencies of a theory which they consider more reasonable than any other to manipulate plain declarations of Scripture, and to account that figurative which is clearly literal, why may not the opponents of evangelical views adopt the same rule, and, as it appears to them more rational to deny than to credit the divinity of Christ and His resurrection, why may they not resolve all the proof-texts in favor of these truths into mere poetic or metaphorical expressions? When this is done by either party it is apparent that naturalism is taken as the rule of faith, not supernaturalism; that reason is followed, not the Bible. Are evangelical teachers prepared to assume the right of shaping the testimony of Holy Writ to suit their precon-

ceived ideas and fancies? If they are, then let them not blame those who, imitating their example, reject the distinctive and essential doctrines of grace. If they are not, then let them interpret the passages which relate to the second advent, as they do those which relate to any other subject. In adopting this course, they will find that Jesus has carefully discriminated between that event and the operations of the Spirit and the interpositions of Providence. He assures His disciples (*John xvi*) that it is expedient for Him to depart, that the Comforter may come and glorify Him and speak of Him, thus distinguishing between the Being who goes and the Being who comes. We have, therefore, no right to confound the one with the other, or to substitute the one for the other according to our own whims or the exigencies of some cherished hypothesis. Our Lord is equally guarded when describing the fall of Jerusalem. Some commentators urge that Christ was to appear and did appear in the Roman armies, or, in other words, that His advent was simply a movement of Providence accomplished when the military forces under Titus besieged the holy city. This, however, is an error, and, strange to say, it is the error which our Lord tries to shield His disciples from in His great prophecy. He tells them distinctly, when they shall see "the abomination of desolation"—that is, "the armies compassing Jerusalem"—"if any man shall say. 'Lo, here is Christ,' believe it not," and assures them that He shall not appear until the Jews have been carried captive into all nations, and until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (*Math. xxiv, Luke xxi.*) The first of these predictions has been accomplished; the Jews are scattered everywhere; but the second has not, for the Gentiles are still the Gospel people. If, then, the invasion of Judea was to precede the calamities which were to befall that land, and the advent was to follow at a subsequent period,

and if the hostile occupation was to occur near the beginning of the Gentile age and the coming of Christ at the close, we have no right to identify them or to speak of them as though they were not radically distinct.

It is consequently manifest that the spiritual hypothesis has no foundation in these passages which are frequently appealed to in its behalf, and it fades into empty nothingness before those which unmistakably imply personality. The text itself is one of these. "If I go," says Christ, "I will come again." The "I" that departs is the "I" that is to return. We know that He ascended personally, and personally must He descend, if His words have any meaning. To evade this inference it is suggested that as He promises to come and receive His disciples unto Himself, and as He did not appear visibly during their life on earth, it must have been fulfilled in their death, and, therefore, that its significance must be exhausted in His taking home the souls of His saints. This interpretation will not hold. In death the child of God is represented as departing to the Savior; never is death presented as the return of the Savior for the child of God. Said Paul: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;" and said Stephen in his martyr agony, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (*Philip. 1, 23; Acts vii, 59.*) To remove this objection and understand our Savior's language, we must remember that He regarded His immediate disciples as part of His Church, and that what He says is applicable to the Church as a whole. It is declared that the entire body of the redeemed shall be glorified together. Paul, when he eulogizes the worthies who have ended their earthly warfare, testifies that they had not received the promise, or what was promised, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (*Heb. xi, 39, 40; see also Rev. vi, 11.*)

In harmony with this thought, Jesus speaks in our text to His Church, saying substantially: "I now leave my Church, but I will come at last and receive her to myself;" and John pictures that glowing consummation when He exclaims, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready." (*Rev. xix, 7.*) Furthermore, in confirmation of an exclusively personal advent, it is written: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven;" "for the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." In the same direction, we read: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory;" and "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (*Acts i, 11; I Thess. iv, 16; Col. iii, 4; and I John iii. 2.*) Then as He is to appear," "to be seen," "to descend Himself," and in "like manner as He went," and as Paul recognizes only one advent—"He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation"—we cannot resist the inference that the only coming known to Scripture is personal, and that He "who is with His people even unto the end of the world" is with them in spirit, and hence, when that end shall arrive, His manifestation must necessarily be other than spiritual, must be bodily and visible. (*Heb. ix, 28.*)

Jesus is to come suddenly. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man;" "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking and marrying," "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "It is not for you to know the times

and the seasons;" "what I say unto you I say unto all — 'Watch!'" "for as the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (*Matt. xxiv; Acts i.*) Here we have a contrast between His first advent and His second. He came as a babe, feebly, unobtrusively and gently; He entered on his public ministry unostentatiously and meekly, and he ended His career obscurely, unnoticed by the world and unappreciated by the Church. So far as earth is concerned, a company of shepherds, a few wise men and several devout persons were the only ones who knew of His birth, a vague rumor of it merely reaching the ears of royal Herod, and he and they had almost forgotten it before the infant Jesus had grown to be a man. Outside of Judea He was hardly known at the time of His death, and the Kingdom which He founded had to struggle slowly into prominence. But not thus shall be His second coming. Then shall He burst upon an apathetic and drowsy world with a grandeur surpassing the brightness of suns and with a footfall drowning the reverberation of thunders. He who once dawned on mankind as silently and gradually as the morning shall at last break forth, as suddenly and swiftly as lightnings that gleam and flash from sky to sky. Hence the Apostle writes: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." (*I Thess. v, 3-4.*)

That there is to be an era of absolute perfection, prior to the Lord's advent and immediately preceding it, seems to be at variance with these representations. Were a thousand years of sinless blessedness to be enjoyed before the occurrence of this stupendous event, surely the generation living near the close would be full of expectation. The very fact

of this period being so radically different from what had been witnessed in former times would arouse the saints to the near approach of the final catastrophe. Neither does it relieve matters to argue that as this gracious season terminates there shall be a terrible revival of wickedness, and that to the people thus demoralized and defiant the appearing of Christ will be unexpected; for it is the peculiarity of this theory that His personal coming is indispensable to the inauguration of the reign of righteousness, and the nations could not therefore be surprised at what had already taken place. If He must come to begin the thousand years of holiness and peace, and if His presence, as is claimed, is necessary to their continuance, then as He will be already here, in no sense can He be supposed to come at the end "as a thief in the night." This is the great difficulty that confronts the pre-Millenarians. How can that be unexpected when it is already an accomplished fact? And the equal difficulty lies against the post-Millenarian hypothesis that the people living in the twilight of the golden era, and who must be conversant with its exceptional character and its significance as a stage in the progress of redemption, should be unaware of the momentous sequel its decline foretokens and be unprepared for its startling revelations. May it not be that both the theories are seriously at fault?

Who is there that can speak clearly and with certainty on that vexed hope of the Church — THE MILLENNIUM — a word not even found in the Bible, and a doctrine that depends for its most coherent statement on a passage surcharged with imagery in a book whose language is highly colored and symbolic, requiring a special Apocalyptic vocabulary for its interpretation? I do not think it wise or safe to insist on views regarding the course and climax of the present gospel dispensation that are primarily and mainly built on the doubtful phraseology of mysticism, even admitting it to be inspired. And unquestionably we cannot be sufficiently sure

of the meaning of the *xxth* of *Revelation* to dogmatize, nor sure enough to warrant us in making it the principal and determining Scripture in a system of eschatology. Such passages or texts have their value, but it does not lie in the direction of definition, formulation, or of exact and literal statement. I am not even quite persuaded that this disputed chapter has for its main subject the portrayal of righteousness reigning in blessedness. While this idea is not absent from the vision, it seems to me there is something else more prominent, and for the presentation of which the picture was painted.

It ought to be borne in mind by students that in the previous portions of John's famously enigmatical volume he brings before us the three mighty and determined antagonists of the Church, that triumvirate of wickedness, the devil, — sometimes called the dragon or Satan, — and the beast, and the false prophet. The book is devoted largely to accounts of their schemes, exploits, apparent successes, and final defeat. In chapter *xix* we have presented the death throes and the awful doom of two of these enemies. Therein judgment is revealed as overtaking and overwhelming the false prophet and the beast. But has the third and the principal figure in the confederacy of iniquity escaped? Not at all; only the description of his humiliation, of his futile hatred of the saints, and of his ultimate suppression is deferred to the *xxth* chapter. There his fate, after a desperate and inglorious struggle, is vividly depicted. And it is this overthrow of Satan which, in my opinion, constitutes the real theme of the first ten verses of the chapter, and not the happiness, terrestrial or celestial, of the redeemed. So far is the latter from being the culminating point of the vision, it is only introduced as a necessary background of light to a scene devoted to an entirely different subject. It is of course impossible within the limits of a few pages to give an adequate exposition of this perplexing Scripture, and it is

more than questionable whether in any number of pages one could be prepared that would be free from objections, nor does it come within the scope of this volume to discuss it with anything like thoroughness. Indeed, I have only called attention to it for the purpose of challenging the correctness of current discussions of last things regarding the precise time of our Lord's advent. One school insists that He shall come before the Millennium, and the other that He shall appear after the Millennium; and I simply raise the previous question as to whether there shall be any Millennium at all in the sense in which the term is used by these disputants. I claim that the intervention of such a golden era between the close of time and the dawning of eternity, a conception born very largely of poetic piety imbued with legends of antiquity, cannot be proven conclusively by the first ten verses of the *xxth* of *Revelation*, from which such conception, it is alleged, derives its authority, as the saints are spoken of there no differently than they usually are in other portions of the New Testament, and as the purport of the whole seems to be the disclosure of Divine supremacy in guarding the saints, in shielding the good and true from the assaults of the devil, and preëminently in bringing to shame and confusion this arch-foe of God and man. I am strongly of the opinion that there is no Millennium at all other than the Christian dispensation, and that during its continuance, however appearance may be against the belief, the Church has been miraculously preserved from the attacks of all adversaries, that religious ideas and the principles of right and justice have exerted a wide and an almost dominant influence on the course of civilization, that the children of God have been reigning, though often unrecognized, as kings and priests, even as our Lord Himself has been ruling, though unseen, in the affairs of men and nations, and that in the end He will demonstrate that evil is an intruder and has no perpetual place in the universe. All things, I claim, tend

toward this glorious result, to the special heralding of which John records his vision. To me, therefore, the present reign of Christ by His Spirit on the earth is the only Millennium the world will ever know, if we may venture to apply this word — which simply denotes “time,” “a thousand years” — to the description of a state or condition. I am not asserting that the present is an ideal state, neither am I denying the need that exists for manifold improvements; only that these are the earlier stages in the fulfillment of predictions regarding the benignant sway of Messiah, and that these mark an immeasurable advance beyond what was known in the pagan world of purity, piety, peace, and prosperity, and that these are preparing the way for the personal coming of Him who shall subdue all enemies under His feet and bring in the everlasting and glorious consummation.

It is to be remembered that Jesus and His followers speak of the Gospel Age as continuing — continuing in its evangelistic efforts, and, alas! with its mixture of good and evil, up to the hour of supreme catastrophe and of final revelation. The wheat and the tares are to grow together until the harvest, and the harvest is the end of the world, when the final separation is to take place. (*Matt. xiii, 37-43.*) Evidently, if this is the distinguishing feature of the dispensation that now is, there is no opportunity anywhere for an intercalary season in which saints and saintly things shall abide apart by themselves, and other kinds of persons and things abide likewise in rigid exclusiveness. Christianity is to be propagated in all lands and under all skies; it is to obtain marvelous and extensive conquests, to modify institutions and elevate communities, and even to demonstrate its ethical and moral supremacy over heathenism; but sin is not to be entirely subdued nor the enemies of truth be overthrown until He shall come to rule whose right it is. An apostle, writing of the “Mystery of Iniquity,” whatever that may mean, declares that it shall be destroyed by “the bright-

ness" of the Lord's appearing. (*2 Thess. ii, 7, 8.*) John, who gives a history of the harlot "Babylon," whatever system of abomination that term may denote, and who assigns her origin and career to the days of the present dispensation, connects with her ultimate ruin the descent of Him "who hath on His thigh and vestment a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords"; and, doubtless, referring to the same organized form of wickedness, Daniel says, "I beheld, and the horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." (*Rev. xix; Dan. vii.*) Thus, the existing Christian economy, and it is to that these passages apply, will be disturbed by apostate powers, corrupt parties, and by manifold maleficent influences, until they are violently ended. The course of events leading to this crisis of deliverance seems to be substantially as follows: The Gospel shall be preached to all nations, and many communities be brought to its light, while civilization everywhere, as now in England and America, shall feel its humanizing touch and take on in some degree its characteristics; and there shall be extraordinary advances made, in arts, sciences, intelligence, and general wealth, so that the refinement and culture of this century shall be to the more highly favored future times as semi-barbarous. Idols shall be cast down and pagan temples be abandoned, and race prejudice shall cease; and the combinations of the poor to resist the insolence of the rich, and the combinations of the rich to rob the poor of their earnings, and the assaults of political corruption against liberty, shall survive only as dark memories of these our darker days. But sin shall not have ceased in the earth. Side by side with evangelical progress subtle iniquities shall exist and shall taint and debilitate the body politic; and then, towards the end, many shall fall away from their decorous but empty profession of religion, and heresies,

agnosticism, atheism, frenetic theosophies, shall startle and demoralize society. Schemes of social equality, regeneration, and happiness, which up to a certain point justified the hopes of their authors, shall suddenly come to naught through the uncured ambitions, rivalries, and discontent of humanity. And then, when the world is dazzled by material splendors and triumphs, and when Christianity has practically ceased to be an aggressive and conquering heroism and has largely fallen a prey to conventionalities; then, when it shall be "neither day nor night," in the midst of wild abuses, silly congratulations, and alarming recklessness, and while a wide-spread and startling revolt is shaping itself against the Church, and prophets are idly speculating about a Millennium that was never promised and can never be, — then suddenly, unexpectedly, the sign of the Son of Man shall be seen in the heavens, and His visible presence shall forever end all shallow illusions and terrible conflicts. Blessed be His holy name! "At evening time it shall be light!"

Jesus is to come gloriously: in the glory of His Father, in the glory of the angels, and in His own glory shall He descend "to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe." (*Matt. xxv, 31; xxiv, 30; 2 Thess. ii, 10.*) All the glory of the universe is His, the glory of Godhood, the glory of angelhood, and the glory of manhood, and invested therewith shall He appear to receive the adoring homage of His people. We have seen Him rise from the dead, we have seen Him ascend into Heaven, and we have heard of His priestly reign at the right hand of the Majesty on High; and now we learn that in the place where He was shamed, derided, and dishonored, and where He was counted unworthy to live, His real grandeur shall be recognized, and His name be exalted above every name. Thus the little one becomes a thousand; thus the Star of Bethlehem expands into the Sun of Righteousness; and thus He who obtained

when first on earth the service of a few lowly men and women shall at last sit upon a throne "like fiery flame," and "thousand thousands" and "ten thousand times ten thousand" shall stand before Him and minister unto Him. (*Dan. vii, 10.*) Then shall His Divinity be manifest in the authority He exercises, for He shall judge the world; in the power He exerts, for He shall raise the dead and renew the physical order; and in the worship He receives, for "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (*Phil. ii, 11.*) Is it not written: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel"; for "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"; "I am the resurrection and the life"; "Death is swallowed up in victory"; and "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind," "but the heavens and the earth which are now kept in store by the same word are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"? (*2 Thess. i, 8; Rom. xiv, 10; John xi, 35; 1 Cor. xv; Isa. lxv, 17, 20; 2 Pet. iii, 7.*)

This, we feel, is as it should be. Not only should His glory be completely vindicated here, but His gracious work should likewise here be completely triumphant. And this the righteous future has in store, both for Him and us. As far as the curse of sin extends, so far shall His redemption reach. By it was the body, as well as the soul, debased, polluted, and sentenced to death; but death shall be rebuked, and then "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." Earth was torn by iniquity from her fellowship with holy worlds, and "gave signs of woe in all her works that all was lost." She became the arena of unhallowed strife; she became the Aceldama, or field of blood, of the universe; the Marah, or place of

bitterness ; the Bochim, or place of weeping. Right is it that she should be restored, and restored she shall be ; “ for the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And when the regeneration of the physical order shall be wrought and perfected, she who housed a brood of evil-doers shall receive to her bosom the host of the redeemed, and God’s primal purpose, contemplated with the very dawning of cosmos, shall be accomplished. The German poet and philosopher, Goethe, encourages this expectation in his own fascinating way where he writes : “ When I stand all alone at night in open nature, I feel as though nature were a spirit, and begged redemption of me. . . . Often, often have I had the sensation as if nature, in wailing sadness, entreated something of me ; so that not to understand what she longed for, has cut me to the very heart.” But her Lord understands her, and shall bring to her large and glorious emancipation.

“ It is not, then, a poet’s dream,
An idle vaunt of song ;
Such as beneath the moon’s soft gleam
On vacant fancies throng,
Which bids us see, in heaven and earth,
In all fair things around,
Strong yearnings for a blest new birth
With sunless glories crowned.”

No ; not a dream, but a precious reality, and when it is brought to pass man “ shall be crowned with glory and honor.” He was made in God’s image to live on earth, then part of the heavenly universe, and empowered to have dominion over all things. Sin interrupted and thwarted the perfect execution of this design. But sin cannot ultimately prevail. Through Christ its malignancy has already been checked and its guiltiness met by an atonement ; and when the final victory shall be complete, it shall be exterminated

from the renewed and purified heritage of the saved, and then shall the ransomed return with everlasting songs, and shall take up their abode in the home that was appointed them from the beginning.

On that day the solemn mysteries of human existence shall become transparent; and it shall be seen that wickedness, suffering, misery, and decay were only transient though terrible shadows on the world. In the nature of things it shall be made apparent that the battle between evil and good could not be a drawn battle, and could not but be decided against the former. Lotze, the philosopher, has expressed this belief: "The totality of all that has value — all that is perfect, fair, and good — cannot possibly be homeless in the world or in the realm of actuality, but has the very best claim to be regarded by us as imperishable reality." And Walt Whitman echoes these sentiments in a passage where he says, "Roaming in thought over the universe, I saw the little that is good steadily hastening towards immortality, and the vast all that is called evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead." These writers have warrant for their hopes. The curse they observe conspicuous and defiant to-day, to-morrow shall be extirpated, stamped out, obliterated; and as it perishes from the face of the world it will be realized that, while it was not a form of good nor a necessary stage in moral development, it was made by the Almighty tributary to the consummation of His high designs and was graciously overruled by Him for the advancement of truth and righteousness.

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

Such in the main must ever be the Christian's trust, though Tennyson in expressing it may have transcended the limit of prudent statement. But well may he be pardoned. The justice of the essential thought of his verse — the present subordination of evil to good, and the final victory of good over evil — may well excuse any infelicities and inaccuracies in details. Broadly he voices the hopes of the weary ages ; and, as we have seen, the future of Jesus is to be preëminently distinguished by their fulfillment. And in this way shall the humiliation and sufferings of our Lord have a fitting outcome, and “the reconciliation of all things” foretold by the apostle be accomplished. Then shall the curtain of time fall on the tragedy of human history. And then — what then? Eternity! “Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever!” “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”

“And earth shall live again, and, like her sons,
Have resurrection to a better being;
And waken, like a bride, or like a morning,
With a long blush of love, to a new life.”

Eternity! but the full import of that tremendous word we cannot penetrate; for how can the finite comprehend the infinite, or the mind that cannot conceive of time, however indefinitely prolonged, without thinking of a beginning and an ending, picture to itself the real significance of the timeless ages? The thought is too high for mortals; we cannot attain unto it. What that solemn word “eternity” stands for is hidden by a veil which hands destined to be dust cannot draw aside; but the beauteous shadows that move behind it, dim outlines of nameless perfection, and the gleams of light that flash through its rents, assure us

that at least eternity denotes unbounded progress, increasing love and friendship, and undying peace and blessedness.

What more it may mean we cannot tell. Sometimes in the stillness of the night, when mystic calm and sacred solitude seem to impart to spiritual vision a wider and clearer range, and when we appear to come nearer the Father than at other seasons and under other circumstances, we think we see, at least I have thought that I have seen, the entire unbroken company of those who bore in time the name of man, abiding in peace and endless joy. Is there "a larger hope" than has usually been preached from pulpits by the ambassadors of Christ? There may be, but it is not disclosed. It is only a hope at most, it is not faith. Certainly sin must be punished, its evil consequences are inevitable, and up to the close of revelation, when the history of this world, as a world under bondage to iniquity, comes to an end, and the judgment scenes are portrayed, there is not a passage that unequivocally warrants belief in universal redemption. Even if Jesus went into Hades, as Dorner teaches, and preached to spirits in prison, there remains to offset the presumption this may create in favor of restorationism the decisive fact that there is to be a final assize, and that from the bar of God some are to go away into death everlasting. The word "everlasting" may not always mean, as Farrar has labored to prove, time without end, ceaseless and exhaustless duration. It may denote, as he insists it sometimes does, only a prolonged and indefinite period. And if this is so, it may be that we have in the Bible simply a history of earth, of its peoples, of its Redeemer, and of the destiny that awaits it; and that until its annals are closed, revelation is withheld regarding what may be the ultimate future — the future lying beyond the future — of those who, rejecting the Savior, were themselves rejected at the judgment from part or lot in its glory. They have no claim on Divine consideration, their transgressions crying out against

them, and they may well have been left to terrible uncertainty. But may it not be, though clear intimation of such a thing has not been given, that the Scripture texts which point to the final destruction of iniquity and evil, and that declare grace to abound more than sin, and that match and apparently equal the "all" involved in Adam's fall with the "all" comprehended in Christ's redemption, were intended to leave the vague impression that the ages of eternity may witness a universal restoration to the favor of God? Alas! the vagueness we must confess, and yet there are few hearts that do not clutch at the shadowy possibility and hope, perhaps even against hope, for the final recovery of the lost. I admit that we tread here the region of hypothesis, that we have only "guesses" and "maybes" to build on, and that we can only desire and tremble, not believe and rejoice. It may be asked, Why speculate on this subject at all? why perplex oneself with questions which only eternity can answer? Perhaps no satisfactory reply can be given; perhaps we are impelled in this direction by uncontrollable circumstances. We are full of anxiety about the fate of the impenitent dead, and seek some ground for believing that they shall not eternally perish, because among them and journeying toward them are those of our own households.

Easy, doubtless, it is to formulate and defend before admiring audiences the dogma of a hell which shall never cease; but not so easy, yea, rather not possible at all, to perform the same feat, or deliberately to avow in solitude this faith when the lifeless body of a brother or son, whose career has been wayward, is laid at one's feet. Then the sorrow of the heart drowns the logic of the head, then every faint encouragement is seized and magnified, and in spite of oneself hope builds its nest in the soul, the hope of another probation somewhere, and of a happier issue. Because we all have sad reasons for desiring that it should be so, we inquire and speculate and search for some proof to convince

us that it shall be so. Doubtless there are few among us, however they may warn their fellow-beings against the criminal folly of continuing in sin, who fail to entertain a shadowy impression that Divine grace may yet triumph over those who spurned its overtures during their earthly lives.

Our longings and yearnings indicate unmistakably that we cannot convince ourselves of the security of the impenitent. The painful sense that wrong-doing arrays against itself the retributive forces of the universe, and that wrath is inevitable, accounts in no small degree for persistent and desperate attempts to discover a silver side to the cloud dark and portentous with coming vengeance. Were men satisfied that there is nothing to fear in God, and were they clear that the soul is not in peril, they would not grope in the dark for some faint sign of possible deliverance in the ages to come. It is the certainty of calamity overtaking transgression, and the apparent enormous proportions of the calamity, that constrain them to cry out in anguish for at least the meagrest token of a further and happier issue. These pathetic optimists are not heretics in regard to the overshadowing supremacy of justice. They perceive the inexorableness of its demands and operations; but they cannot bear to abandon any of their fellow-beings to its crushing penalties. The dim sense of what its weight must be would lead them to brave the fires of hell to bring enlargement to the doomed, even as Paul could wish himself accursed for the sake of Israel according to the flesh. It is the unendurable depth of the despair that gives rise to the "larger hope"; it is the torturing blackness of an endless night that prompts the passionate desire for a morning. Whether such expectations are altogether illusive or not, eternity will soon demonstrate. Then shall we understand many things we are not able to bear here; and then shall we perceive, whatever may be the issue, that the Infinite One has never been other than a living, merciful Father to all His creatures, and that

He never has "found pleasure in the death of him who dieth."

And, until then, it is for us to labor for the conversion and salvation of humanity. It is for us, as far as feasible, to embody in ourselves as individuals and churches the spirit of the mighty Galilean, who sympathized with the world in its extremity and offered up His life for its redemption. The "larger hope" without the larger work betrays the sentimentalist, who does not in reality feel for men, but who is seeking merely a poetic excuse for not exerting himself on their behalf. But, however faithless he or we may be, I desire those whose eyes rest on these closing sentences to realize that Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He has not forgotten the race for which He died. Still He pleads, still He entreats, still He invites, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Think of Him thus, as thus beseeching from the Heavens, and think of Him as Savonarola thought of Him, when he ascribed to Him these words of tender expostulation : —

"Fair soul, created in the primal hour,
Once pure and grand,
And for whose sake I left My throne and power
At God's right hand,
By this sad heart, pierced through because I loved thee,
Let love and mercy to contrition move thee.

"Cast off the sins thy holy beauty veiling,
Spirit divine !
Vain against thee the hosts of hell assailing :
My strength is thine !
Drink from My side the cup of life immortal,
And love will lead thee back to heaven's portal."

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